# WORKERS VANGUARD

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 971

7 January 2011

AP

Getty

## Free Private Manning! Hands Off Julian Assange!

# WikiLeaks, Imperialist Lies and Retribution

The release by WikiLeaks of some 250,000 State Department cables has provoked a vicious campaign of retaliation by the rulers of U.S. imperialism against Julian Assange, the Web site's founder, and Army Private Bradley Manning, who is accused of leaking secret material. Attorney General Eric Holder is reportedly preparing criminal charges against Assange, an Australian citizen, possibly under the Espionage Act of 1917. Manning faces a court martial and up to 52 years in prison if convicted. He incurred Washington's wrath when a video of a U.S. war crime in Baghdad was posted last April by WikiLeaks. It showed an Apache helicopter gunning down and killing at least 12 people, including two Reuters journalists, while the pilots gloated over the carnage.

Manning—if he was, indeed, the source of the leaks—and Assange are courageous individuals who have performed a laudable service by lifting, however slightly, the veil of secrecy and lies that enshrouds the imperialists' machinations. They richly deserve to be defended by workers and the oppressed throughout the world. Protests in defense of Assange have been held in a number of countries, and the Australian Council of Trade Unions has spoken out for him. It is crucial for the international working class to defend WikiLeaks and Assange and also to demand freedom for Private Manning, who is being held under torturous conditions of solitary confinement at the U.S. Marine brig in Quantico, Virginia.

Though one would hardly guess it from the Obama administration's frenzied reaction to the latest leaks, they actually contain little in the way of dramatic revelations. The imperialists are, simply, enraged at the slightest light being shed on their workings. A number of the cables are, to be sure, somewhat embarrassing for the U.S. and its client regimes. Thus, the leaked cables reveal that NATO has developed a secret military plan for defense of Poland and the Baltic states against Russia. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and other Arab countries are revealed to be pressing the U.S. to stage a military attack targeting Iran's nuclear enrichment program, showing yet again that Iran *needs* nukes to deter attack by the U.S. or its Israeli proxy. And the Palestinian Authority and Lebanese government are shown to be working with Israel to target, respectively, Hamas and Hezbollah.

Reuters

Getty

**President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton (inset) at November 20 NATO summit in Lisbon on Afghan occupation. Demonstrators in Multan, Pakistan burn American flag in support of WikiLeaks, December 9.**

The cables also provide an insider's view of U.S. imperialism's high-handed operations within the borders of its client states. They show U.S. participation in the operational command of the "drug war" in Mexico, from developing overall strategy to selecting individuals to be targeted. American officials in Yemen negotiated a scheme with that country's president to disguise U.S. air strikes on suspected Al Qaeda camps as being carried out by the Yemeni government, including when civilians get blown away. Such exposures are not, to say the least, to the benefit of the imperialists or their lackeys. The cables also include a report from the U.S. ambassador to Honduras on the June 2009 overthrow of populist president Manuel Zelaya characterizing the actions of "the military and/or whoever ordered the coup" as "illegal." Whatever the case, the Obama administration has backed the government brought to power by the coup.

A particularly noteworthy subject covered by a number of the leaked cables is the case of torture victim Khaled el-Masri. A German citizen of Lebanese descent, el-Masri was seized in late 2003 while on vacation in Macedonia and shipped off to a secret CIA prison in Afghanistan where he was held in solitary confinement, interrogated and beaten. Even after the CIA established that el-Masri was not the man they thought he was (his name is similar to that of a suspect in the 9/11 attacks), they continued to hold him incommunicado because "he knew too much." Finally, after nearly five months' detainment, el-Masri was dumped in a remote part of Albania, never having been charged with a crime.

The cables about el-Masri, which were sent from the U.S. embassies in Germany, Spain and Macedonia in 2006 and 2007, confirm what was long suspected: Berlin did not enforce arrest warrants against 13 CIA operatives accused of involvement in the kidnapping of this German citizen

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**IN DEFENSE OF MARXISM AND SCIENCE...6**

# WikiLeaks...

*(continued from page 1)*

because Washington exerted intense pressure, warning of "potential negative implications for our bilateral relationship" if the case was pursued.

### Obama White House: Vicious and Vindictive

Following the release of the video of the helicopter attack in Baghdad, WikiLeaks made public some 76,000 classified military field reports from the Afghanistan occupation that document the brutality inflicted by imperialist forces upon civilians, including by CIA-led forces operating out of bases along the border with Pakistan. Then in October, WikiLeaks published nearly 400,000 field reports on the Iraq war and occupation detailing more than 109,000 deaths, mostly of civilians.

The Obama administration has lashed out in fury against Private Manning by subjecting him to inhuman prison conditions that are clearly intended to break his will. Since his arrest last May, Manning has been held in solitary confinement. He is prohibited from exercising or watching television news programs; guards check on him every five minutes; a light is kept on in his cell, including when he tries to sleep. According to journalist David House, the only person to visit Manning in prison other than his lawyer: "He is being kept in a kind of punitive fashion before his trial and it is definitely weakening his mental state" (*BBC News*, 24 December 2010).

Manning is, as Assange correctly noted, a political prisoner. Assange, meanwhile, is under house arrest in Britain as he fights a Swedish extradition order citing allegations of "rape" and "sexual molestation." Those accusations—which boil down to charges of unprotected sex in what were by all accounts consensual relations—are patently trumped-up. Prosecutors in Sweden initially opened, then dropped, then reopened an investigation into the accusations, which were made by a couple of WikiLeaks groupies. In fact, Assange has not been charged with any crime.

As Assange has pointed out, the real threat he faces is the possibility of extradition to the U.S., where both Democratic and Republican politicians are screaming for his head on a pike. Vice President Joe Biden was joined by Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell in branding Assange a "high-tech terrorist." The implied threat behind this smear was made explicit by Tom Flanagan, former adviser to Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, who declared that Assange "should be assassinated."

Assange is, basically, an ardent liberal critic of imperialist policy. In the late 1990s, he co-authored an encryption program called Rubberhose that activists in places like East Timor, Russia, Kosovo, Guatemala, Iraq, Sudan and Congo could use to protect sensitive data. In 2009, Amnesty International gave Assange its media award for a WikiLeaks investigation of the killing of hundreds of young men in Kenya by government forces. The fact that U.S. government spokesmen are discussing hitting Assange with the 1917 Espionage Act is a crystal-clear demonstration of how "national interests" are invoked by the capitalist rulers to clamp down on their critics. Meanwhile, Bank of America, MasterCard, PayPal and Visa Europe have done what they can to help shut down Assange's Web site by blocking payments to WikiLeaks.

The Espionage Act was one of an array of repressive measures adopted after U.S. imperialism's entry into the First World War to criminalize antiwar activity. It mandated imprisonment for any act deemed to interfere with the recruitment of troops. Haunted by the specter of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which ripped Russia from the capitalist market and ended its participation in the war, in 1918 Congress passed the Sedition Act that made criticizing the "U.S. form of government" a felony.

Among the first and most prominent targets of the Espionage Act was Socialist Party spokesman Eugene Debs, who was jailed for a June 1918 speech at a workers rally in Canton, Ohio, where he denounced the war as capitalist slaughter and paid tribute to the Bolshevik leaders of the October Revolution. The same law was used in 1953, at the height of the Cold War, to execute Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were accused of spying for the Soviets during World War II, when the U.S. and the USSR were allies. As their son Robert Meeropol declared in a December 29 statement in defense of Assange, the Espionage Act "transformed dissent into treason." In the early 1970s, the Nixon government tried, unsuccessfully, to use the law to go after Daniel Ellsberg, whose release of the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times* shed light on the history of U.S. imperialism's war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

While no one knows exactly what the Obama administration is cooking up against Assange, there is no question that

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## Soviet Publication of Secret Treaties

TROTSKY

LENIN

*Two weeks after the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution of 1917, Leon Trotsky, then the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, announced the Soviet government's publication of secret treaties, exposing the machinations of the prior tsarist and Provisional Government regimes and their imperialist allies. Published after the Soviet government had declared Russia's withdrawal from the carnage of World War I, a war of competing imperialist powers for redivision of the world, the revelations helped foment a wave of struggle by the imperialists' colonial victims. Most importantly, the Bolsheviks advanced the fight to end the war through proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries.*

In publishing the secret diplomatic documents from the foreign policy archives of Tsarism and of the bourgeois coalition Governments of the first seven months of the revolution, we are carrying out the undertaking which we made when our party was in opposition. Secret diplomacy is a necessary tool for a propertied minority which is compelled to deceive the majority in order to subject it to its interests. Imperialism, with its dark plans of conquest and its robber alliances and deals, developed the system of secret diplomacy to the highest level. The struggle against the imperialism which is exhausting and destroying the peoples of Europe is at the same time a struggle against capitalist diplomacy, which has cause enough to fear the light of day. The Russian people, and the peoples of Europe and the whole world, should learn the documentary truth about the plans forged in secret by the financiers and industrialists together with their parliamentary and diplomatic agents. The peoples of Europe have paid for the right to this truth with countless sacrifices and universal economic desolation.

The abolition of secret diplomacy is the primary condition for an honest, popular, truly democratic foreign policy. The Soviet Government regards it as its duty to carry out such a policy in practice. That is precisely why, while openly proposing an immediate armistice to all the belligerent peoples and their Governments, we are at the same time publishing these treaties and agreements, which have lost all binding force for the Russian workers, soldiers, and peasants who have taken power into their own hands.

The bourgeois politicians and journalists of Germany and Austria-Hungary may try to make use of the documents published in order to present the diplomacy of the Central Empires in a more advantageous light. But any such attempt would be doomed to pitiful failure, and that for two reasons. In the first place, we intend quickly to place before the tribunal of public opinion secret documents which treat sufficiently clearly of the diplomacy of the Central Empires. Secondly, and more important, the methods of secret diplomacy are as universal as imperialist robbery. When the German proletariat enters the revolutionary path leading to the secrets of their chancelleries, they will extract documents no whit inferior to those which we are about to publish. It only remains to hope that this will take place quickly.

The workers' and peasants' Government abolishes secret diplomacy and its intrigues, codes, and lies. We have nothing to hide. Our programme expresses the ardent wishes of millions of workers, soldiers, and peasants. We want peace as soon as possible on the basis of decent coexistence and collaboration of the peoples. We want the rule of capital to be overthrown as soon as possible. In exposing to the entire world the work of the ruling classes, as expressed in the secret diplomatic documents, we address the workers with the call which forms the unchangeable foundation of our foreign policy: "Proletarians of all countries, unite."

—"Statement by Trotsky on the Publication of the Secret Treaties," 22 November 1917, reprinted in *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, Vol. 1 (1917-1924), edited by Jane Degras (1951)


**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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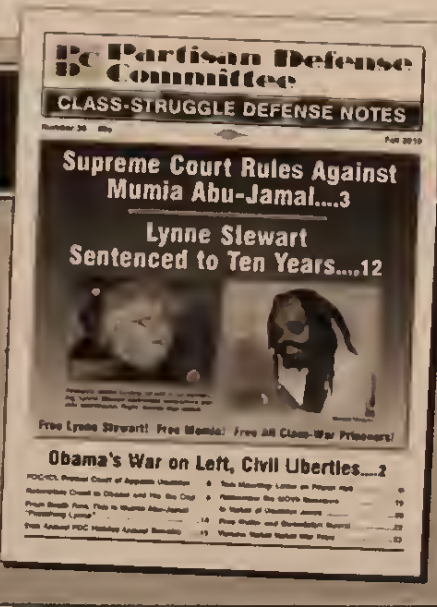


# Germany: Capitalist Austerity and Anti-Muslim Witchhunt

*The following is translated from* Spartakist *No. 185 (October 2010), published by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany. The "Hartz IV" laws referred to in the article are a series of measures enacted in 2003-05 by the former Social Democratic (SPD)/Green coalition government that greatly reduced unemployment and social welfare benefits.*

More than 80 billion euros [$106 billion]: that is how much the "savings package" put forward by the Christian Democrat/Free Democrat (CDU/FDP) government intends to cut from the federal budget by 2014. There is already talk of further budget slashing of the same order for the following two years. The largest part of this, over a third, targets social welfare, i.e., those receiving unemployment benefits under "Hartz IV" laws. Their number climbed to 6.7 million in April 2010, including 1.7 million children. Society's poorest and weakest are being forced to pay for the crisis of capitalism. In a situation where there is massive popular rage directed at banks fattened up by the state and at the government's "savings package," former Bundesbank [federal bank] exec board member Thilo Sarrazin's inflammatory anti-Muslim tract *Deutschland schafft sich ab* [*Germany Does Itself In*], which claims that Muslims have too many children and threaten to "take over" Germany by 2100, was like a gift from heaven.

The debate over Sarrazin speaks to an ominous new, brazen display of German imperialism that started to become apparent early in 2010 with the Greek economic crisis. Germany had hitherto played the paymaster whenever the European Union (EU) got into economic difficulty. But now German capital allowed Greece to slide more and more toward the very brink of insolvency, blocking EU rescue plans while interest rates on Greek bonds skyrocketed.

It was only when interest on Portugal's government bonds also began to rise, in a scenario where Greek bankruptcy was going to be followed very shortly by the insolvency of Portugal, Spain and even Italy, that [German chancellor Angela] Merkel yielded, agreeing to an extortionate "rescue package." Chauvinism of the vilest sort was unleashed against the Greeks over "aid" payments for liabilities held in large part by German banks. In other words, first and foremost the German banks were being aided, while the German state rakes in repayments with compound interest clawed out of the hides of the Greek populace. Such German imperial arrogance has not been seen for a long time indeed.

Demagogic incitement is neither new nor surprising for Sarrazin, a member of the SPD since 1973. Last year he was raving against Muslim immigrants in Berlin "continually producing new little headscarf girls" (*Lettre International*, September 2009). Demands were raised to increase the Hartz IV payments for children at the beginning of 2010 after the Federal Constitutional Court declared the rates unconstitutional (of course, not because they were far too meager but solely for not being "transparent" enough). FDP foreign minister Guido Westerwelle rejected this as "late Roman decadence," while promptly discerning "socialist features" in the discussion. Sarrazin criticized Westerwelle...and then went him one better. Hartz IV recipients, he opined, could save money on water: "Showering with cold water is really much healthier. No one who takes hot showers has ever gotten far in life" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1 March 2010).

IG Metall

Spartakist

**Left: August 18 rally in Hamburg of IG Metall union demands equal pay for contract workers at Airbus. Above: Trotskyists at September 12 Berlin protest against racist anti-Muslim campaign.**

Sarrazin's vile tract openly advances classic race "theories" whereby intelligence is inherited and genetic differences between ethnic groups exist. Immigrants' inferior education is supposedly based on their genes, shifting attention away from the social causes of the wretched state of education. The 2003 Program for International Student Assessment study confirms once again "that in scarcely any other comparable industrial country is educational success so closely tied to social origins as in Germany." The cutbacks following capitalist reunification of Germany [in 1990] have only increased this social discrimination: "Only six out of 100 working-class children commence university study, while 49 out of 100 high school students from top-earning families go on to attend university.... Between 1982 and 2003 the percentage of university students from the topmost social layer has risen steadily, from 17 to 37 percent, whereas the share of students from the lowest layer has decreased from 23 to 12 percent."

Immigrants brought here in the 1960s as "guest workers" for the most wretched jobs still predominantly belong, along with their German-born children and grandchildren, to the lowest social layers of this racist capitalist society. Situated primarily in the working class, they are disproportionately affected by Hartz IV. This is also the case for East Germans—who, at a rate of more than 17 percent, are twice as likely to be Hartz IV recipients as the nationwide average—and for single parents, i.e., mainly women.

For immigrants, the language barrier compounds the effects of poverty, not only making it difficult to deal with government officials, doctors and the like, but also causing children to fail in school. Since in the west of Germany in particular there are too few daycare facilities, where attendance also costs the parents money, these children fail to learn the language as toddlers and are unable to follow instruction conducted in German once they go to school. By the time they have halfway mastered the language, they are hopelessly behind in the subject matter and many do not succeed in getting any secondary school diploma. Without such a diploma these youth are then condemned to poorly paid, insecure jobs and are much more likely to be funneled into Hartz IV. This, and not some sort of racist garbage about genes, explains the cause of immigrants' inferior education.

Certain aspects of Sarrazin's hate campaign that are harmful particularly from the standpoint of foreign policy have been condemned by the CDU/FDP government—e.g., all his drivel about a "definite gene" that "all Jews share." However, Sarrazin's overall thrust of turning all Muslims into scapegoats, in classic divide-and-rule manner, is finding support. In this way, rage over injustice and poverty can be channeled away from the bourgeoisie and its state. According to Sarrazin's vile social-Darwinist logic, any attempt to improve the desperate social situation of sections of the Muslims in Germany is condemned in advance to failure. And while he spews venom over the "Untergang" [decline] of Germany due to Muslims' supposedly having too many children, the government is eliminating parental support money for Hartz IV recipients, thereby centrally targeting impoverished Muslim families, along with unmarried mothers.

Far from Sarrazin being ostracized, his garbage is being widely discussed, as if this race "theory" were utterly harmless. In a 4 September 2010 commentary, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* even springs to his defense: "His mention of a 'Jewish gene' in an interview was reflexively turned into a scandal—in reality, he had asserted that 'Jews share more genetic material with each other than with surrounding non-Jewish areas,' as researcher Gil Atzmon says. This is indeed a political event...not in Germany, however, but rather in the Near East. The wave of public support for Sarrazin...is not for his biased or incorrect theses. It is for his depiction of abuse of the welfare state and of a refusal to integrate, for which almost everyone can cite examples."

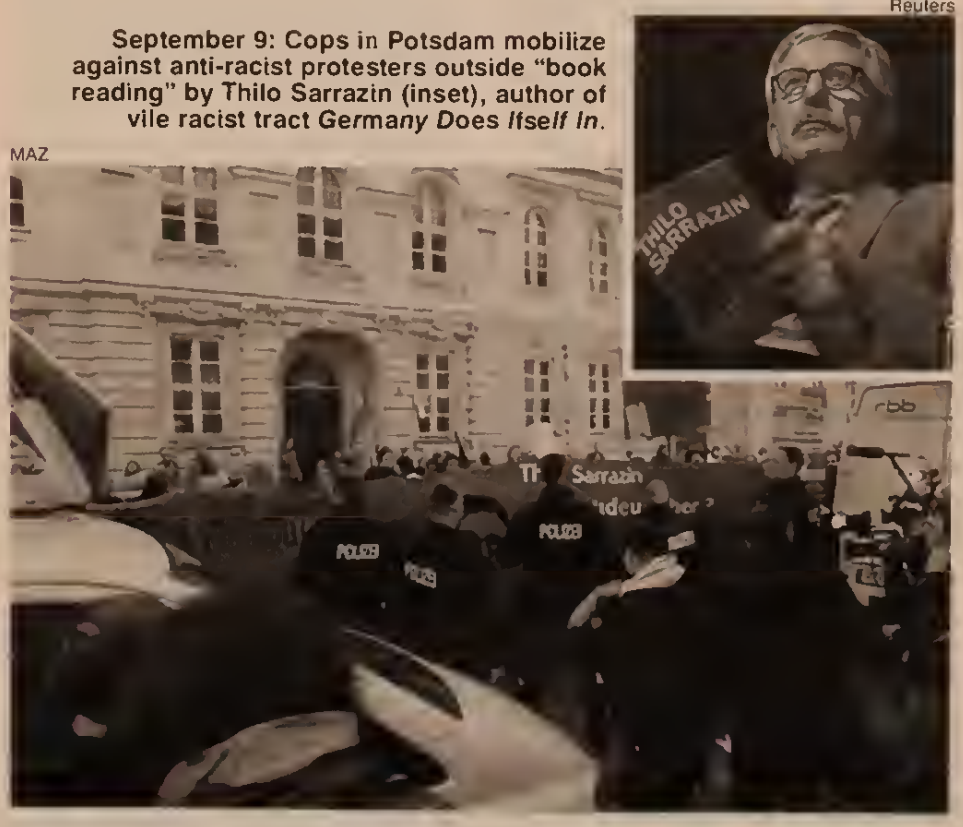
The German bourgeoisie, which brought Hitler to power and bears the responsibility for the Nazis' race mania that led to the industrial murder of six million Jews, is again publicly and sympathetically discussing race "theories" in its Frankfurt house organ. Racism and anti-Semitism are inseparably linked to the ruling capitalist class.

Widespread receptiveness to Sarrazin's filth is the bitter fruit of the racist "war on terror" proclaimed by the SPD/Green government in the footsteps of U.S. president George W. Bush after September 11, 2001. Abroad, the political construct of a "war on terror" is utilized to deploy the Bundeswehr [army] in the colonial war in Afghanistan. Domestically, people with a Muslim background sit in the state's cross hairs: a racist dragnet was followed by raids on mosques, and thousands and thousands of immigrants were subjected to "checks without reason for suspicion"

*continued on page 4*

Reuters

**September 9: Cops in Potsdam mobilize against anti-racist protesters outside "book reading" by Thilo Sarrazin (inset), author of vile racist tract *Germany Does Itself In*.**



# Germany...

*(continued from page 3)*

by the police. Open season was declared on German Muslims, who were kidnapped, tortured and incarcerated in prison hellholes like Guantánamo by the CIA, with the approval and support of the German government, as shown by the cases of Murat Kurnaz and Khaled el-Masri. Bourgeois reaction had thus once again created an internal and an external enemy in order to legitimize the demolition of democratic rights, after Communism had falsely been declared dead with the capitalist counterrevolution in the DDR [East Germany] and the Soviet Union.

The murder of the young Egyptian woman Marwa El Sherbini—before her three-year-old son's eyes—by an enraged anti-Muslim racist in a German courtroom in the summer of 2009 was a direct result of the state-led "war on terror." Sarrazin's baiting fuels a pogrom atmosphere against the Muslim minority and incites murderous racism. Recently, the police confiscated posters of the [fascist] NPD that claimed: "Sarrazin Is Right!" Sarrazin pressed charges against the fascists, but they are just the spirits he has called forth himself.

## Reformism Whips Up Nationalism and Racism

A few years ago the filth that is now being purveyed by Sarrazin was heard only from Nazi ideologues, and on 30 August 2010 the SPD Executive initiated an expulsion process against Sarrazin for "having transgressed a boundary line in his statements on the genetic identity of peoples, ethnic groupings or religious communities." The social democrats are polarized over this. Two Berlin SPD motions to expel Sarrazin for his racist interview in *Lettre International* were rejected last year because, according to the party's arbitration commission, it could see "neither a party-damaging nor a dishonorable act." The SPD Executive was then deluged with hundreds of e-mails, letters and phone calls. The majority came from non-SPD members who defended Sarrazin; the letters from SPD members were split half and half.

At the beginning of September, according to a survey by the Berlin Info Institute of 1,024 registered voters, 36 percent of the SPD voters and 43 percent of the [reformist] Left Party voters thought Sarrazin was more or less right (47 percent of SPD voters and 34 percent of Left Party voters disagreed with him). Support for Sarrazin springs from the logic of social-democratic reformism, which functions as a doctor at the sickbed of capitalism. This means arbitrating the struggle of various groups of the needy for the ever scantier crumbs from the table of the capitalist rulers, who play off one against the others: "Ossis" [East Germans] against "Wessis," Turkish immigrants against East Germans and immigrants from the former Soviet Union, men against women, etc. All this necessarily promotes nationalism and racism.

Sarrazin is a prime example: In late January 1990 in the Ministry of Finance, he drafted the plan for the currency union between West and East Germany for [then-chancellor] Helmut Kohl, an important contribution to driving capitalist counterrevolution forward. For his "services" he was made head of the Finance Ministry's technical oversight of the Treuhand [agency established to privatize DDR industry]. Almost 7,000 state-owned companies were sold for a song to private investors, 3,700 firms were "liquidated," 2.5 million DDR citizens were thrown onto the streets, and industrial capital estimated at 600 billion euros was transformed into a mountain of debt exceeding 200 billion euros. This was accompanied by a racist campaign against asylum seekers, leading to a state-organized pogrom in Rostock-Lichtenhagen in August 1992. At the same time, with its infamous Petersberg Resolutions, the SPD agreed to the de facto elimination of the right to asylum. There followed arson attacks in Mölln and Solingen, where Turkish women and girls were burned alive.

DPA

**January 1996: Fascists burned down immigrant refugee hostel in Lübeck, killing ten.**

Following reunification, the bourgeoisie also saw no necessity for maintaining West Berlin as a display window to contrast with the DDR, and in 1991 Sarrazin came out for dismantling federal subsidies to West Berlin. Ten years later, Berlin was bankrupt. Today, its share of Hartz IV recipients, at 18 percent of its population, is higher than in any other federal state. Add to this the ruin of the Berliner Bankgesellschaft [one of Germany's ten largest banks] due to the corrupt cronyism of the SPD/CDU Senate. As Finance Senator, Sarrazin then became the whip for the SPD/Left Party Senate that took office in 2002 to "restructure" the city and its bank at the expense of the workers and poor. Here he also excelled in demagogic attacks on the Turkish-origin Muslim populace in Berlin, which was suffering massive unemployment due to industry having decamped from West Berlin. Sarrazin did well for himself, however. Having "voluntarily" quit the Executive Board of the Bundesbank, he now can claim a monthly pension of 10,000 euros.

That Left Party voters agree with Sarrazin is hideous but, alas, not surprising. The Left Party's Keynesian program of using German capital to create more jobs in Germany is fundamentally nationalistic. The same is true of the "Ossi" [East German] nationalism that they court. And let us recall [Left Party leader Oskar] Lafontaine's infamous speech at Chemnitz in the summer of 2005, where he launched chauvinist attacks on workers from Poland and other East European countries, claiming that "fathers of families and women are losing their jobs because low-wage foreign workers are taking their jobs." If one accepts and strives for responsibility for administering capitalism on a national basis, what other solution is there to unemployment than aiming to defend "German jobs" in competition against workers in other countries?

## Marx21 and the Anti-Muslim Witchhunt

The supporters of Tony Cliff in the Marx21 group have participated in various protests against anti-Muslim racism and opposed banning the headscarf in public service in Germany and the ban on wearing the *burqa* in France, which they rightly brand as racist. But in doing so they drop any opposition to the headscarf and/or veil as an instrument for the oppression of women. In contrast, we oppose the veil as part of our uncompromising struggle for the liberation of women. We understand that state bans promote racism, deepen women's social isolation and make it even harder for them to find jobs, strengthening their dependence on husband and family and reinforcing their oppression. We are for the separation of church, mosque and synagogue from the state. Religion is a private matter, and it is not the job of the state to decide who wears what. Simultaneously, as atheist Marxists, we fight against any and all religious, nationalist and chauvinist prejudices, which regularly lead to bloodshed and suffering. What is required is a socialist revolution to eliminate capitalism as the material cause of poverty, wars and religion.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Marx21's British fraternal organization, capitulated even more openly to Islam. In 2003, the SWP boasted of having organized an antiwar meeting in Birmingham with a separate seating area for women! The SWP wanted to cash in on the huge antiwar protests that were led by the Stop the War Coalition (which the SWP had itself brought into existence) and were supported by Muslim organizations. With the "Respect" Coalition, which it founded jointly with Labour Member of Parliament George Galloway in 2004, the SWP sought to feed off the widespread hatred for Tony Blair's Labour government and its "war on terror" among the especially hard-hit Muslim populace. The SWP leaders saw to it that Respect's founding program did not even formally come out for "socialism," and SWPers voted down a motion for the elimination of the monarchy. Within Respect, the SWP tailored its demands to the mosques and as good as buried the fight for women's liberation and homosexual rights. Nor did the SWP contradict Galloway on his declared opposition to abortion (see the Spartacist League/Britain's *Workers Hammer* No. 194, Spring 2006).

This capitulation has a prehistory. The Cliff tendency hailed the Islamic-fundamentalist *mujahedin* in Afghanistan, who had been armed to the teeth by the CIA and were fighting against the Soviet Red Army after it rushed to the aid of the secular, modernizing, left-nationalist PDPA regime. Even today, the Cliffites regurgitate the imperialists' war propaganda against those who fought for the most fundamental rights of women and against the big landowners: "For the left, the [Soviet] invasion was a catastrophe whose effects are felt even today. The leftists had sought to carry out a land reform and forcibly introduce the liberation of women. Hence, in the 1990s the terms 'feminism' and 'women's liberation' were equated by many Afghans with mass murder. Everyone knew somebody who had been slain in the name of socialism and feminism" (*marx21*, June 2008). For us Marxists, the Soviet military intervention opened up the possibility of the social liberation of the Afghan masses, in particular of women. This is why our call was "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"

Following capitalist reunification, which the Cliffites had supported to the best of their ability, Linksruck, the predecessor organization to Marx21, ardently contributed to the 1998 electoral triumph of the SPD, calling for years to vote for the SPD—which in 2001 proclaimed the anti-Muslim "war on terror." Marx21 (21 October 2009) established the connection between Sarrazin's demagogy and his role in the Berlin Senate:

> "As Berlin Finance Senator he continued the line of Berlin mayor Klaus Wowereit (SPD), that it was necessary to carry out savings 'till things squeak.' The interplay at the time between the two recalls the grilling method 'soft cop, hard cop.' Sarrazin took on the role of the 'hard cop,' demanding in a consciously provocative way, sharp cuts in social benefits. This made it possible for Wowereit to slip into the role of the 'soft cop,' who puts a brake on the Finance Senator and institutes 'less harsh' cuts.
>
> "The purpose of such politics is, however, not just to evade responsibility for such policies by pointing to scapegoats. It is also about splitting up resistance to social cuts and racism in line with the motto 'Divide and rule'."

But the Marx21 group says not a word about the Left Party's responsibility for carrying out these assaults in coalition with the SPD. (Like Wowereit, the Left Party plays the "soft cop" role and now rejects much of Sarrazin's filth.) No wonder: In 2006 it still called for re-electing the Left Party in Berlin, despite all the prior instances of the Senate's despicable attacks. Marx21 is deeply buried in the Left Party and has representatives on the party executive. It spreads the illusion that there can be parliamentary governing coalitions—via the Left Party—that serve the interests of the oppressed. In fact, the German state serves the capitalist class and, as Lenin explained in *The State and Revolution*, it is the strategic task of the working class to smash this capitalist state through socialist revolution and replace it with a workers state.

## Hartz IV: An Assault on the Entire Working Class

Sarrazin's hate campaign accompanies the government's attack on Hartz IV recipients, which constitutes an assault on the entire working class. Right now the Hartz IV "basic payment schedule" amounts to a pitiful 359 euros per month, from which all expenses except rent and heating must be met. For couples, each receives only 90 percent of this amount, and children, depending on their age, get 80, 70 or as little as 60 percent. (Money for child support is also subject to the Hartz IV payment schedule—i.e., it disappears.) As Anne Ames observed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in her 2007 study, "It's Not Something I Chose....":

> "The payment schedule was supposedly based on the statistically calculated expenses of the poorest fifth of one-person households in the Federal Republic. In 2003, their expenses came to 828 euros, or to 526 euros after deducting the cost of rent and heating. Politicians managed to scale these expenditures down to a basic payment of 345 euros essentially by categorizing some types of expenses of the poorest fifth of one-person households as only partially 'relevant to the payment schedule'."

For foodstuffs, 4.36 euros per day are provided. In the case of children who, after all, are growing and need a balanced diet for healthy development, it is—believe it or not—3.49 or as little as 2.62 euros per day! Even worse, since the estimates for many other necessary expenditures are much too low, Hartz IV recipients must make up for this out of their food money. A result of this is the rapid growth of charitable food pantries in Germany, which either sell food cheaply or give away food they get from supermarkets that cannot sell it (often because the sell-by date has expired). An article in the *trend* online newspaper (July/August 2010) reports: "In 1963 the first of such charitable food distributions was set up in the USA; in Berlin the first one was founded in 1993. By now there exist 800 pantries with more than 2,000 distribution points used by a million people, approximately 30,000 mostly volunteer pantry activists and a few thousand temp workers with one-euro jobs [paying about one euro per hour in addition to unemployment benefits]."

Hunger and malnourishment have again become a mass phenomenon in Germany, the fourth-largest economy in the world. Seen as politically desirable, this situation was deliberately brought about by the "left" capitalist SPD/Green government under [Gerhard] Schröder and [Joschka] Fischer with their Agenda 2010 "reform" package. Ever more untrammeled lust for profits—this is how the bourgeoisie celebrates the destruction of the DDR and Soviet Union through capitalist counterrevolution. The CDU/FDP "savings package," which is denounced hypocritically and in lukewarm fashion by the SPD and Greens as "unsocial," is the linear continuation of their own Agenda 2010. The Left Party's declamations against the "savings package" and Hartz IV are no less hypocritical, although this is not obvious to many. All the Left Party's efforts are aimed at administering the capitalist state, and where it participates in governing individual states, as in Berlin and Brandenburg, it carries out and administers Hartz IV poverty for the capitalist class.

Hartz IV expresses the murderous contempt of the bourgeoisie and its political minions for those who generate no profits for the capitalists and whom they hence regard as "superfluous," profit-reducing "sources of expenses." Moreover, the situation of those impoverished under Hartz IV is to be made even more intolerable: first to intimidate those who still have a job, so that they are thankful to the bosses and accept wage cuts and the worsening of working conditions, and also as motivation for Hartz IV recipients to accept even the most wretched jobs. In a form of de facto forced labor, Hartz IV recipients are threatened with having even these starvation payments slashed should they reject a job that the unemployment office considers "reasonable."

Every year more than 700,000 people are shuttled through one-euro jobs, destroying regular jobs and driving wages down. According to the June 2010 report of the Institute for Work, Skills and Training, currently 17.9 percent of all employed persons in the West and *39.3 percent* in the East are working in low-wage jobs. As with Hartz IV, those hardest hit are above all immigrants and their descendants, along with East Germans and women. Almost one in three working women is in a low-wage job and women constitute 70 percent of the low-wage sector. From the start of the SPD/Green government in 1998 up to 2008, the low-wage sector grew by 50 percent, to 6.55 million, while these low wages themselves sank. Thus the German bourgeoisie has succeeded in constructing one of Europe's largest low-wage sectors.

## For Class Struggle Against the "Savings Package" and Hartz IV!

The DGB trade-union federation's leadership is now lamenting the fact that since the introduction of Hartz IV, the number of full-time workers whose wages have to be "supplemented" by the state has risen sevenfold to 355,000. Since 2005 the state, they say, has had to ante up 50 billion euros because of "wage-dumping by unscrupulous employers." This again sheds light on the goal of the Hartz "reforms," whose main purpose was not to save money. Essentially, they play workers and the unemployed against each other and act as a battering ram to destroy the unions and drive down the wages and working conditions of the working class, with a corresponding rise in capitalist profits. In 1867, Karl Marx had already analyzed this question in Volume One of *Capital* and roughly delineated the necessary response by the working class:

> "If its [capital's] accumulation, on the one hand, increases the demand for labour, it increases on the other the supply of labourers by the 'setting free' of them whilst at the same time the pressure of the unemployed compels those that are employed to furnish more labour, and therefore makes the supply of labour, to a certain extent, independent of the supply of labourers. The action of the law of supply and demand of labour on this basis completes the despotism of capital. As soon, therefore, as the labourers learn the secret, how it comes to pass that in the same measure as they work more, as they produce more wealth for others, and as the productive power of their labour increases, so in the same measure even their function as a means of the self-expansion of capital becomes more and more precarious for them, as soon as they discover that the degree of intensity of the competition among themselves depends wholly on the pressure of the relative surplus population; as soon as, by Trades' Unions, etc., they try to organise a regular co-operation between employed and unemployed in order to destroy or to weaken the ruinous effects of this natural law of capitalistic production on their class, so soon capital and its sycophant, political economy, cry out at the infringement of the 'eternal' and so to say 'sacred' law of supply and demand."

Instead of uniting workers and the unemployed in the struggle for a decent life, the union bureaucracy supported the SPD/Green government's Hartz "reforms" and throttled protests against them. Committed to capitalism, it attempts to reconcile the interests of the working class with those of the capitalists. In the name of its nationalist bourgeois program for "Standort Deutschland" [Germany: the place for industry and investment], the union bureaucracy pressures the workers to make concessions so as not to endanger German capital's competitiveness.

Not only has the labor bureaucracy allowed the low-wage sector to expand massively through the Hartz laws, but countless sellouts have caused the wage level of the working class as a whole to sink: While in the last decade gross wages in Germany increased 21.8 percent, in the EU as a whole they rose 35.5 percent; for fringe benefits, the increase in Germany was a scant 9.3 percent versus 38.5 percent in the EU. This treacherous class collaboration has not only brought about an explosion in profits for the German bourgeoisie, but has also put massive pressure on workers' wages and conditions in other European countries, causing a downward spiral of wages.

The DGB bureaucracy is organically linked to the SPD and Left Party, which are, as Lenin aptly put it, bourgeois workers parties— i.e., while they have a base in the working class, they have a bourgeois program. For revolutionaries, the strategic task is to break the working-class ranks from the bourgeois workers parties through intervention to drive forward the class struggle, aiming to build a revolutionary multiethnic workers party. It was precisely the SPD's ties to the trade unions that made it so useful to the bourgeoisie as a governing party, serving to minimize proletarian resistance to the assaults. But the increasing anger in the working class over the attacks by the SPD-led government plunged the SPD into a crisis and made support to the government by the trade-union tops increasingly difficult. Part of the union bureaucracy broke with the SPD in 2003 to found the social-democratic WASG, which later fused with the ex-Stalinist PDS to form the Left Party, whose program does not differ qualitatively from that of the SPD. Basically, the Left Party is dreaming of a return to the SPD of the "good old welfare state" before Schröder.

DDP

**1 May 2010: Protesters in Solingen hold signs reading "We Are Germany" outside meeting of right-wing anti-Islamic party Pro NRW.**

To stop Hartz IV's worst excesses, the union tops are demanding a legal minimum wage. But instead of mobilizing their rank and file, they want the SPD and Left Party to push this through parliament. The IG Metall union, whose wage negotiations with the steel industry will set a pattern for other unions, has raised the important demand that contract workers receive the same wage as permanent employees. This de facto call for "equal pay for equal work" is not just long overdue. Holding to this basic union principle would have required the most determined class struggle against the introduction of the Hartz laws.

Whether it is the minimum wage or equality for contract workers, what is necessary is a fight to organize the unorganized. Talk about equal wages must not mean silently accepting the firing of contract workers. Rather, contract workers must be mobilized side by side with permanent workers in a battle for equal pay for equal work and for the complete integration of contract workers into the workforce. This struggle must he linked to one for full citizenship rights for all who live here. Only in this way can the struggle for equal working conditions be extended to those driven into illegality by racist immigration laws. A class-struggle union leadership must be built.

To counter the discrimination against women and immigrants in the labor market, it is necessary to wage a struggle for union control of hiring according to the principle of first come, first served, so that no one can be turned down on the basis of sex or a "wrong" name. At the same time, special programs are necessary to compensate for the frequently inferior or non-existent professional training women and immigrants receive. It is necessary to fight for the special needs of women and immigrants.

We are resolute opponents of chauvinist forced assimilation, fighting instead for revolutionary integration. Therefore, we oppose making German the exclusive official language in government offices and in schools, etc. However, it is clear that mastering German is a prerequisite for obtaining a job, and that without it, integration is impossible. For this, free language courses must be made available to all.

An adequate number of free, round-the-clock kindergartens is needed so that women can go to work. In 2008, a program was announced to make childcare facilities available for 35 percent of all children under the age of three by 2013. In and of itself, this was way too limited. In any case, hardly any deeds have followed the announcement. Also, sending your kids to day care costs money that poor parents often lack. The crying need for additional kindergartens, particularly in the West, drives many single mothers into Hartz IV or keeps the married ones economically dependent on their husbands. Day care centers as well as schools must, where needed, have instruction in more than one language, so that immigrants' children can fully comprehend what they are being taught from the beginning.

It is necessary to break with the union leadership's "Standort Deutschland" ideology and, in internationalist solidarity with the working classes of other countries, wage an unyielding struggle for the interests of the workers, unemployed and Hartz IV recipients. In the 1938 Transitional Program of the Fourth International, Leon Trotsky elaborated a system of transitional demands linking the struggle for the workers' daily demands, which conflict with the ever more constricted bounds of decaying capitalism, to the urgently necessary battle for socialist revolution. He wrote:

> "Trade unions and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week. Wages, with a strictly guaranteed ***minimum***, would follow the movement of prices. It is impossible to accept any other program for the present catastrophic period....
>
> "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."

We are fighting to break the most politically advanced workers and youth from illusions in the SPD and, more particularly, the Left Party and to win them to the task of building a revolutionary, multiethnic workers party committed to the struggle for new October Revolutions.■

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# In Defense of Marxism and Science

*We print below, edited for publication, a presentation by T. Marlow of the Spartacist League at a Chicago forum last July 24.*

When the French mathematician Pierre-Simon Laplace went to present a copy of his treatise on celestial mechanics to Napoleon, the latter is said to have stated: "M. Laplace, they tell me you have written this large hook on the system of the universe, and have never even mentioned its Creator." Laplace replied, "I had no need for that hypothesis."

Two centuries later, any American politician caught on tape saying something like that would never be able to run for dogcatcher, let alone the Senate or presidency. The U.S. is peculiar among the advanced industrial countries in its level of religiosity—over three-fourths of respondents in an AP poll said they believed in angels. Worse still is an increase in the rejection of scientific thinking, from the millions seeking miracle cures from a panoply of snake-oil vendors to a politically cohesive and dangerous sector of religious fundamentalists out to turn the U.S. into a theocracy. I am not referring to the demented followers of Osama bin Laden. I am speaking of the Christian right, which has abortion and evolution as focus points of attack.

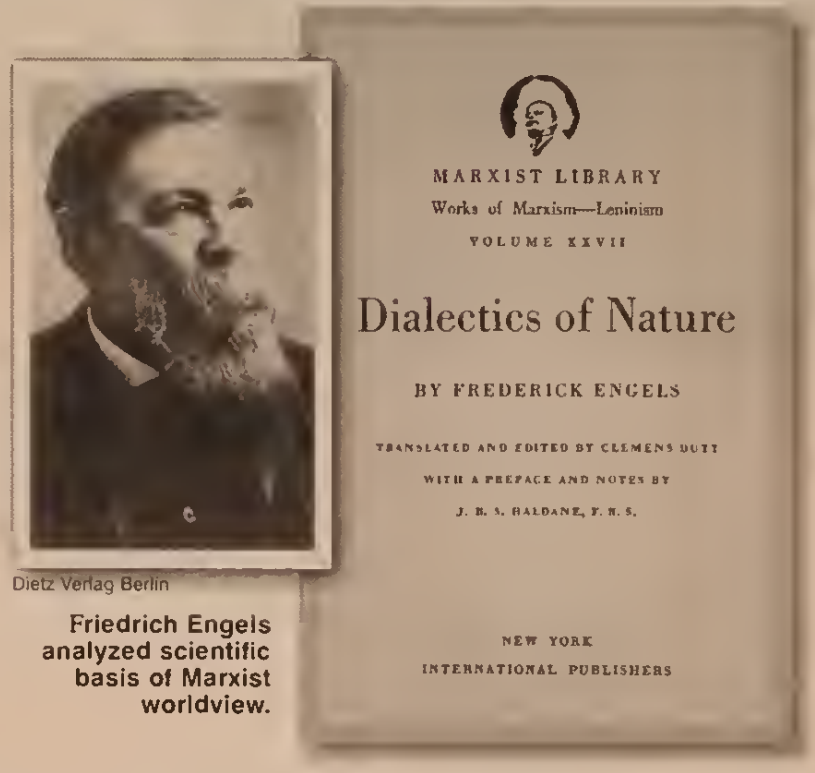
In the *Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels state: "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class." Well, we have a ruling class that could be described as drunk with power. The collapse of Stalinism in East Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989-92 was a world-historic defeat for the working class of the world. The American bourgeoisie declared the "death of Communism," and even the "end of history." With military power far greater than any of their imperialist rivals in Europe or Japan, the U.S. rulers have acted with little restraint on their predatory desires, as in Iraq and Afghanistan and recently in Haiti.

At the same time, the consciousness of the proletariat has been thrown back so far that even advanced workers and others involved in social struggle no longer identify their goal as building a socialist society. In the U.S. in particular, there is the question of race: black oppression is the bedrock of American capitalism; the notion of black people as being inferior, which survives to this day, was the ideological counterpart to black chattel slavery. America is if anything more segregated than 25 years ago.

Especially since the September 11 attacks, the "war on terror" has been used to beat the working class into submission and squelch opposition to the predations of U.S. imperialism across the globe. It is not just the linguistically challenged George W. Bush—Obama was made Commander-in-Chief in part to give the image of U.S. imperialism a needed facelift. But smoother words have not changed American military rampaging in Iraq and Afghanistan, nor the extension of police-state measures at home. The American ruling class sees no reason why it cannot continue to literally get away with murder.

In these circumstances it is no wonder that religious reaction is ascendant and even the rationalism of the Enlightenment of the 18th century is under attack. You don't have to be a Marxist to oppose things like creationism, but without a Marxist program you have no way out of the impasse in which society finds itself. Society is rent by class struggle, legal and extralegal, as the bourgeoisie seeks ever greater profit from the exploitation of labor and workers resist. As Marx showed, there is a fundamental contradiction between the private ownership of the means of production and the further advance of productive forces. The rule of capital must be smashed by the working class, organized and led by a revolutionary Trotskyist party.

Part of the process of building that party is to educate the proletariat as to its historic role and responsibility for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. That means a Marxist understanding of society, and that in turn means an understanding of the work of science and its defense against the purveyors of mystical and medieval rubbish. So first we have to review a bit of history.



Dietz Verlag Berlin

**Friedrich Engels analyzed scientific basis of Marxist worldview.**

## The Middle Ages and Renaissance

The fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 to the birth of Leonardo da Vinci in 1452 (or the victorious siege of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks a year later) marked about a thousand years. That's about one-fifth of the entire history of human civilization since the first example of writing (the cuneiform tablets of southern Mesopotamia from about 3000 BC). In West Europe this period is called the Middle or Dark Ages. Not coincidentally, the dominant political and economic institution in this period was the Roman Catholic church. Along with the nobility, the church was a major landowner. The vast majority of the population was made up of serfs tied to the land of their lord, to whom they owed service as a feudal obligation. Illiterate, disease-ridden, all but slaves to their temporal and spiritual masters, the peasant masses faced, to quote Thomas Hobbes, "continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (*Leviathan* [1651]).

The Renaissance, which began in the city-states of northern Italy and was spurred by the growth of trade with the East, helped engender a new class of merchants, later to become the bourgeoisie of modern capitalism. As these merchants' ships went further out into the world, they needed better knowledge on the workings of the natural world and the cosmos. In his 1883 Introduction to *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels succinctly notes:

> "The main work in the first period of natural science that now opened lay in mastering the material immediately at hand. In most fields a start had to be made from the very beginning. Antiquity had bequeathed Euclid and the Ptolemaic solar system; the Arabs had left behind the decimal notation, the beginnings of algebra, the modem numerals, and alchemy; the Christian Middle Ages nothing at all."

The church dogma on what we would call astronomy was what Ptolemy wrote in the second century AD. In his system, the Earth formed the center of motion, around which the Sun and planets rotated. The stars were fixed on a celestial sphere further out from the Sun and planets. What was on Earth was corrupt; what was in Heaven was perfect.

What passed for medicine also came from the Greeks, in particular, Hippocrates, in the 5th century BC. Human health was determined by the interplay of the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile). Ill health meant an imbalance of the humors, which could require purging or bloodletting. These and other often fatal remedies continued to be used in the 18th and 19th centuries: George Washington himself died most likely as a result of bloodletting by his doctors when he fell ill in 1799.

In the 1500s, things started to crack for the feudal order and especially for the church. The Protestant Reformation is normally tagged to 1517, when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the cathedral door in Wittenberg. This doctrinal split would lead to no small amount of bloodletting not intended for medical purposes—for example, the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Rather more unnerving to the feudal structure was the Peasant War in Germany, beginning about 1525. The same Martin Luther wrote a pamphlet on this occasion titled "Against the Murderous and Thieving Hordes of Peasants."

Galileo was born in 1564 to a nohle—but not rich—family. Like many children before and after, he was taken to church by his parents, and evidently the sermons were as boring then as now. Unlike other kids, he made some good use of the time. He observed the great chandelier in the church, which would swing when disturbed by a breeze. He timed the swings using his pulse and found that the period was independent of the amplitude of the oscillation. That's now Physics 101, and laid the basis for the first

Andreas Cellarius, Muzeum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego (insel)

**Left: Breaking with centuries of church doctrine, Copernicus (1473-1543) developed heliocentric model of universe. Right: Galileo, tried by Inquisition, was forced on pain of torture to recant Copernican model.**

Cabasson

accurate clocks based on pendulums.

Galileo was above all a keen observer and experimentalist. When he heard that spectacle lenses were being used in Holland to view distant objects, he immediately constructed a crude telescope. Spurred by the results, he worked out his own procedures for grinding lenses to the exquisite tolerances needed for higher magnification, and produced a relatively small 20X to 30X telescope. He viewed the Moon, and saw not a perfect luminous disk but a *place* with geologic features just like the Earth—mountains, valleys, plains. When he looked at Jupiter, he saw little stars nearby seeming to move across the planetary disk. He immediately realized these were moons. Subsequently he observed Venus and saw it go through phases like the Earth's moon.

These observations shattered the Ptolemaic model of an Earth-centered system and convinced Galileo that Copernicus' idea that the Sun was the center of motion was in fact correct. For publishing this belief, Galileo was tried by the church in 1633 and, not surprisingly, convicted of heresy. Threatened with torture by the Inquisition, he recanted and spent the rest of his life under house arrest. From there he wrote his *Mathematical Discourses Concerning Two New Sciences* and had it smuggled out of reach of the Vatican to Holland, where it was published in 1638. His observations on the motions of falling bodies anticipated Isaac Newton's synthesis 48 years later.

Why did Galileo recant? One answer is that he was scared by what happened to Giordano Bruno, the itinerant ex-priest who supported Copernicus' idea about the Sun at the center, and much else. He was accused of heresy, imprisoned and tortured for *seven years* during his trial and finally burned at the stake in 1600. And the man who had ordered Galileo to abandon Copernican ideas in 1616 was the same Cardinal Bellarmine who sent Bruno to the stake. From what I have read, it is unfair to say that Galileo was a coward. First, Galileo's book, giving very thinly veiled support to Copernicus' theory, had been published in 1632 and already had circulated throughout Europe. Second, he had no substantial religious differences with the church on matters of theology, so a refusal to recant would mean torture and death for no real purpose.

Giordano Bruno was another matter, and it is very doubtful whether his recantation would have saved his life—he actually offered to partially recant in an appeal to the Pope. Just to give you an idea, here are a few of the things with which he was charged: 1) erroneous opinions on the Trinity and the divinity of Christ; 2) belief in the reincarnation of souls in new bodies, human or animal; and (the kicker) 3) denial of the virginity of Mary. There are not a few Christians who would roast poor Bruno *today* for that! You can imagine how well it went down with the Pope in 1600.

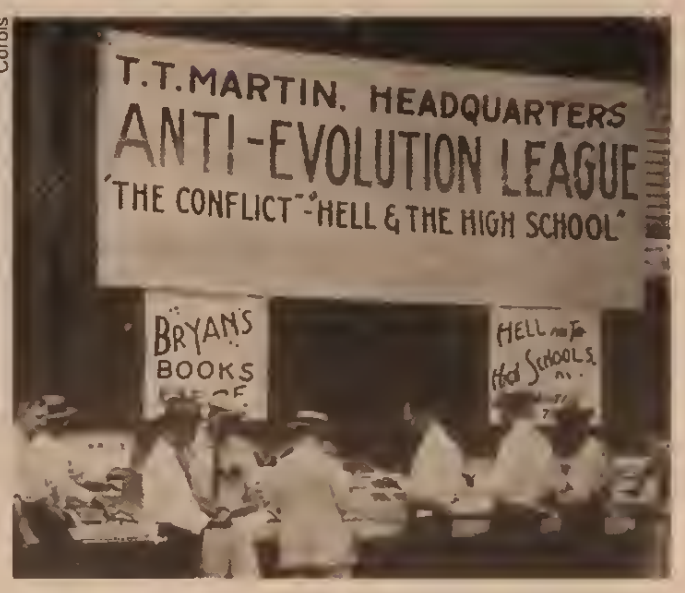
## Science and the Industrial Revolution

Following Galileo, Newton produced his three laws of motion and the law of universal gravitation. Along with Gottfried Leibniz, he also invented differential calculus—the mathematics needed to solve the problems of moving bodies with forces such as gravity acting upon them. In biology, Carl Linnaeus introduced the systematic classification of animals and plants, based on form and structure. And in 1785, the Scot James Hutton laid the basis for modern geology and showed that the Earth had to be much, much older than the 6,000 years deduced by Bishop James Ussher (1581-1656) from a study of the biblical sources.

The middle to late 1700s was a period of tremendous advances in science and technology, driven by (and pushing forward) the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Science was held in high esteem by the rising entrepreneurs, and in the growing manufacturing city of Birmingham there arose an informal grouping called the Lunar Society, which coalesced around 1765 and lasted about 30 years.

The name came from their routine of evening dinner meetings on the Monday closest to the full moon, a practical idea since many had a trip of several miles on horseback to their homes, and there were no streetlights. That would change—one of the Lunatics (as the Society members jocularly called themselves) was William Murdoch, who was developing the production of gas from coal to use for illumination. Other notable members included James Watt, inventor of the condensing steam engine (which made steam power practical and efficient enough for its later use in locomotives); Joseph Priestley, the preacher and chemist credited with the discovery of oxygen; Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles and an evolutionist; and Josiah Wedgewood, chemist and mineralogist who made a fortune by making fine ceramics and pottery. Benjamin Franklin was a corresponding member—he was celebrated throughout Europe as an eminent scientist for his work on electricity.

Culver



Corbis

**Left: Charles Darwin presented groundbreaking theory of evolution by natural selection. Right: Evangelists, segregationists mobilized in Dayton, Tennessee, at time of 1925 Scopes "Monkey Trial," famous battle between evolutionists and creationists.**

Politically the Lunatics were pretty progressive for their day. Many had favored the colonists during the American War of Independence and also supported the revolutionaries in France. In fact, on 14 July 1791 they were having a dinner in Birmingham to celebrate the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille when the inn was threatened by a mob howling "Church and King!" The mob's main target was Joseph Priestley, whose support for the National Assembly won him an offer of French citizenship. Priestley's house was set on fire by the mob, but fortunately he and his family escaped. They later emigrated to the U.S.

It is literally inconceivable to envisage something like the Lunar Society today. An approximation would be for the heads of U.S. Steel and General Motors to have joined with the leading professors of MIT and Harvard to sign a petition supporting Fidel Castro in his struggle against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in Cuba in 1958!

The Lunatics mirrored capitalism in its youth, breaking down the barriers of feudalism as part of the practical struggle of the marketplace. Capitalism did bring a large increase in the productivity of labor and a corresponding vast increase in the amount of goods produced. Some of this trickled down even to the working class, whose labor created the surplus value pocketed by the capitalist as profit. However, exploitation of the most brutal fashion remained the lot of the masses, and the next economic dislocation causing a reduction or cessation of industrial production would (and did) throw the workers on to the street with no means of support. The scientific unraveling of the basis of capitalist production and profit was presented in detail by Karl Marx in his work *Capital* in 1867. But the core of Marxism—dialectical materialism—had been enunciated 20 years earlier in the *Communist Manifesto*.

## The Science of Marxism

In his 1883 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels wrote:

> "The basic thought running through the *Manifesto*—that economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles—the basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx."

For the first time, the study of human society and its development had been given a firm scientific and materialist foundation. It is not surprising that Marx and Engels immediately appreciated the significance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, first published in 1859. The astounding variety of animals and plants in their myriad shapes and forms were not static sculptures made by a divine Creator, but had evolved from a common ancestor and differentiated over the expanse of geologic time. As Engels said in his 1883 speech at Marx's grave:

> "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means of subsistence, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of *vice versa*, as had hitherto been the case."

The philosophical scaffold of Marxism is called dialectical materialism. Materialism, meaning that the world exists in reality; it was not created within the realm of the human mind. Dialectical in the fact that the essence of our world (indeed our universe) is matter in motion. All things exist not in stasis but in a process of development. An analogy is the difference between a still photograph and a motion picture. We know this almost by instinct when we look at plants and animals—consider the bud of a cherry tree, from emerging green speck in spring to flower to tasty fruit. But from birth in a class-divided society, we are made to accept the idea that the social structures and norms of human relations are essentially static—there are rulers and ruled, usually with God blessing the whole arrangement.

The genius of Marx was to apply the dialectical materialist method to the study of society and economy. In a 1914 piece titled "Karl Marx," V.I. Lenin quotes Engels, adding his own interpolations:

> "'Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich [this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.!] and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis Nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical.
>
> "'The great basic thought,' Engels writes, 'that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away... this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things.... For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendency from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain.' Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is 'the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought'."

## The Dialectic of Science

Scientists seek to be as objective as possible, to eliminate systematic errors and to require that facts be established by experiments which can be repeated by others to confirm the results. Theories are built upon testable hypotheses, which lead to more experiments and further refinements of existing theory or creation of a new and better one. Science has its own dialectic—it is not static, but ever-changing. It is also materialist. Nature and her workings are to be explained using natural causes. Things happen for physical reasons, not the whim of a Zeus, Yahweh, tree spirit or water nymph. On one side science, on the other superstition, and ne'er the twain shall meet.

Any human activity such as science is subject to error, sometimes conscious, sometimes not. The human brain is very good at finding patterns. This was selected for by evolution. Our ancestors did not have the luxury of extended observation time to determine whether that shadowy figure in the grass was a grazing gazelle or a Smilodon with 7-inch fangs. But that pattern-seeking neural circuitry can also fool us. When I look at the sky I don't immediately see bulls and crabs and hunters with studded belts. But given enough boredom, or

*continued on page 8*

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# Marxism and Science...

*(continued from page 7)*

perhaps eating the right mushrooms, one could certainly explain the constellations seen by Greek shepherds 2,500 years ago.

Another common fallacy is that correlation implies causality, which actually is an offshoot of seeking patterns where none really exist. An amusing example of correlation not being cause comes from an open letter to the Kansas School Board written by Bobby Henderson on behalf of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, which was set up as a satirical protest against creationism:

> "You may be interested to know that global warming, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters are a direct effect of the shrinking numbers of Pirates since the 1800s. For your interest, I have included a graph of the approximate number of pirates versus the average global temperature over the last 200 years. As you can see, there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between pirates and global temperature."

Above all, one must remember that scientists are human and work in the midst of a class-divided society. Even a religious physicist can be objective when measuring the distance between the Earth and Moon, but as one approaches social questions and research, ingrained bias emanating from the dominant social mores can sometimes overwhelm the best of objective intentions.

A striking case in point is given by the late Stephen Jay Gould in his book *The Mismeasure of Man*. He recounts the story of American physician Samuel George Morton, who had collected some 600 skulls representing populations on the continents of North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Morton measured the cranial volume of the skulls (a good measure of the brain size of the person when alive) and published his results, including the original data. Just as Morton would have expected, Anglo-Saxons had the highest average (92 cubic inches), followed by Asians in the middle and blacks on the bottom (83 cu in). When Gould re-analyzed Morton's data he found biases built into the specimens used for each racial group. For example, the aboriginal sample was heavily represented by skulls from Peruvian people who are short. Similarly, the black sample included proportionally more women than the Caucasian. Smaller bodies means smaller brain mass—it has nothing to do with intelligence, and should have been corrected (but wasn't). As Gould noted, this was done "without conscious motivation; expectation is a powerful guide to action."

In medicine today, researchers use the double-blind randomized clinical trial to eliminate such subjective biases from influencing the results. Double-blind means that both the study subjects and those providing the treatment do not know whether any particular patient is receiving the actual medicine or a sham control. Blinding the patients by randomization helps correct for the placebo effect—people want to be cured or get some relief from illness or pain and will respond just to the soothing voice of a caregiver or to a sugar pill (especially if brightly colored!). Blinding the caregiver prevents unconscious cues being given to the patient that would allow the latter to guess that they are receiving real treatment rather than the control.

Terrence McCarthy

***The Mismeasure of Man* by late paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould refuted pseudoscientific justifications for racism.**

## Medical Quackery

It is true that what is now called science-based medicine is rather a recent innovation. Voltaire is credited with the aphorism, "Doctors are men who prescribe medicines of which they know little, to cure diseases of which they know less, in human beings of which they know nothing." In 1891, the writer and physician Oliver Wendell Holmes acidly noted that if most of the drugs then in use were loaded on a ship and if it "could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind and all the worse for the fishes."

Times do change, and procedures such as MRI or CT scans which are routine today would have seemed like science fiction a generation or two ago. As advances have been made in physics and chemistry, and especially molecular biology, they have dramatically affected the practice of medicine. Yet the popularity of "complementary and alternative medicine" (CAM) is great and rising. Many people can't afford regular medical care, and patients will grasp at anything that promises a cure. I.e., CAM is a social problem.

What is alternative medicine? There are lots of definitions, but at bottom it is the same division that separates science from non-science. Real medicine is based on substances or procedures whose efficacy can be explained by purely natural causes. All the rest depends on something non-physical, be it divine intervention (prayer healing) or the invocation of some mysterious "energy" or "life force" outside the laws of physics. Medicine is real and the rest is faith-based, not unlike religion, though at times without the guy in the sky.

Buzzwords like "energy" and "life force," which are at the heart of all alternative medicine nostrums, are really nothing but a cover for the idea of "vitalism"—i.e., that there is something unique about living systems. This was scientific mainstream until the 1820s when German chemist Friedrich Wöhler accidentally synthesized urea from inorganic compounds. This was the first time a molecule previously only obtained from living organisms had been created in the laboratory, and it marked the birth of organic chemistry. Actually the division of chemistry into organic and inorganic is itself a vestige of the vitalist era. The laws governing chemical reactions are the same.

Edzard Ernst, an MD and also practitioner of CAM, and Simon Singh, a British science journalist, have written a useful book, *Trick or Treatment: The Undeniable Facts about Alternative Medicine*. If anything the authors bend over backwards to give CAM the widest latitude to show proof of some shred of benefit beyond the placebo effect. And what is the conclusion? Acupuncture and homeopathy: useless; chiropractic: maybe you could try it but only for lower back pain, though a physical therapist would be just as good, and cheaper; herbal medicines: a few have a mildly positive effect, but in most cases conventional drugs work as well or better.

So why is CAM still around? Here are 33.9 billion reasons: that is the number of dollars Americans spent out-of-pocket on alternative medicines in 2007, according to the National Institute of Health's alternative medicine center. This does not even include charges to insurance. Out of that, about $15 billion went for supplements—that's about one third of the out-of-pocket expenses for real prescription drugs. One possible reason is the odd belief that nature is this kind, gentle, holistic entity that has only your best interests at heart. This shows a profound ignorance of the natural world. I would suggest that those so believing pick up a good book on human parasitology, preferably with good color pictures!

## Chiropractic Pseudoscience

I'll pick on chiropractic. These guys not only fleece you but can cause great damage in the process. Chiropractic started in the 1890s when one Daniel David Palmer came up with the idea that diseases were caused by misalignments of the vertebrae that interfered with the flow of "innate intelligence" from the nervous system to the organs. These disruptions were called subluxations. Was this on the basis of systematic investigations of any kind? No. Palmer's epiphany came one day when he claimed to have cured a person with hearing problems by adjusting his spine. One slight problem is that the cranial nerves controlling hearing and balance go directly from the lower brain to the middle ear—they do not emanate from the spinal cord at all. As for the "innate intelligence," not a shred of physical proof has ever been given for its existence.

Chiropractors perform what they call manipulation to cure the subluxations in the vertebral column. This is a rapid acceleration thrust on the bone which moves it just past the point where muscles could conceivably move it on their own, but short of bone and tissue damage. Well, that's the theory. For my book, it sounds more like what happens to your spine in an automobile accident. When applied to the cervical vertebrae—the seven vertebrae of the spinal column in your neck—the results can be vertebral arterial dissection. This can obstruct blood flow to the brain or throw a clot that leads to a stroke.

Chiropractors, like all purveyors of "altemative medicine," like to portray themselves as little Davids struggling against the Goliaths of Big Pharma and the American Medical Association. But chiropractors pull in almost $4 billion a year—it's a business, just like Big Pharma. Chiropractor Web sites are full of handy tips on "practice building"—roping in more patients, preferably for weekly or biweekly office visits. Even if you are well, they want you to get an adjustment—like a tune-up, I guess. Even cars only need an oil change every 6,000 miles, not every week!

## Religious Obscurantism

Now we come to the granddaddy of all quackery: religion. I'm going to concentrate on the Christian fundamentalists, in particular the very political anti-science, anti-evolution movement now masquerading as Intelligent Design (ID). All three of the so-called Abrahamic faiths share a common creation myth. God created everything, and all the animals and plants have come from that creation pretty much unchanged. Some of the anti-evolution types allow for a bit of change within a species, but no speciation. So, it was no surprise that Darwin's book was met with such hostility by the believers of theism: God was removed as the causative agent for the wonderful variety of living things, and man was an animal like the rest and descended from primate ancestors. And what the yahoos couldn't stomach at all was Darwin's speculation—now backed by overwhelming evidence—that the human ancestor had come out of Africa.

Intelligent Design is a relatively recent sprout on the Christian bush. Actually, it is an example of rapid speciation into a new environment. Prior to 1987, the creationists were touting "creation science" and demanding that it be taught in the public schools alongside evolution. That got shot down by a series of court decisions, starting with an Arkansas case in 1982, and then in the Supreme Court in 1987. So rather quickly—no evolution here!—"creation science" transformed itself into "intelligent design."

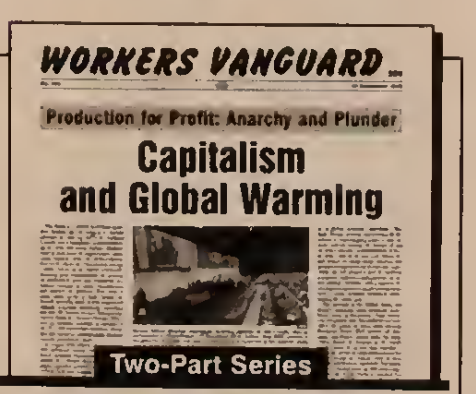
Matt Groening

**Dr. Steve performs chiropractic "adjustment" on Homer Simpson.**

Intelligent Design pretends that it is scientific, but its basic premises are very wrong and it is important to see why. Premise one is "irreducible complexity"—there exist things in nature like the eye, or with a nod to nanotech, cellular assemblages such as the bacterial flagellar motor. According to ID, such things have to be taken as a whole, with every part essential to function—remove one piece and it is non-functional. Supposedly there is no step-by-step way of building these structures, i.e., no Darwinian method. Since they are so complex, they couldn't have come about by chance and therefore had to have been created by a Designer. They're careful not to say God, but it's pretty clear they are not referring to the Tooth Fairy.

In the *Origin of Species*, Darwin anticipated such problems, including the example of the vertebrate eye, and the creationists love to quote his sentence: "To suppose that the eye...could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree." But they never mention his answer in the very next sentence of the passage: "If any variation or modification in the organ be ever useful to an animal under changing conditions of life, then the difficulty of believing that a perfect and complex eye could be formed by natural selection, though insuperable by our imagination,

WV No. 943 (25 September 2009)

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can hardly be considered real." Think about it: would you rather have blurred vision, or be totally blind? Even an imperfect eye gives an organism a selective advantage compared with no sight at all.

The second premise is the Anthropic Principle. There is such vastness to the universe. There is the beautiful, intricate motion of the planets around the Sun, moons around the planets, of the stars and the galaxies—they now agree with Copernicus and Galileo—and here is Earth, just right for living things to exist on. If the Earth were closer to the Sun it would be too hot—look at Venus. Further away and it would be too cold. It looks like the whole universe was created or fine-tuned with human life in mind, so to speak. Hence, there must have been a Creator. Sir John Polkinghorne, a respected British physicist and also a Christian minister, stated: "The fundamental parameters of the universe are such as to permit the creation of observers within it."

Sounds profound, right? But physicist Robert L. Park translated Polkinghorne into something less pretentious, more along the lines of what Yogi Berra might have said: "If things were different, things would not be the way things are." There is another amusing argument put forward by the late author Douglas Adams, who, among other things, wrote the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Golaxy* and was a script editor for the famous British series *Doctor Who* in 1979. He compared the Anthropic Principle to a "puddle waking up one morning and thinking, 'This is an interesting world I find myself in, an interesting hole I find myself in, fits me rather neatly, doesn't it? In fact it fits me staggeringly well, must have been made to have me in it!'"

Of course the whole geological record shows that the Earth is much older than 6,000 years, and that thousands of species have come and gone over the ages. Creationists used to wail on about the lack of transitional forms for whales—how could a terrestrial mammal smoothly evolve into one now at home only in the oceans? Well, in the last 15 or so years, a whole string of fossils have been discovered showing in beautiful detail all those "missing forms." In any case, the creationists aren't about to let facts get in the way. Henry Morris, founder of the modern creationist movement, stated: "No geological difficulties, real or imagined, can be allowed to take precedence over the clear statements and necessary inferences of Scripture."

While the creationists may seem fringe oddballs (comedian Lewis Black described them as the people who are "watching *The Flintstones* as if it were a documentary"), they are very political and they have supporters with deep pockets. In 1998, the Discovery Institute, a major think tank for creationism/ID, produced an internal memo called the "Wedge Document." It

Columbia University

Getty

**Left: Robotic system for micro eye surgery shows America has among the best medical technology in the world—if you can pay for it. Right: Victims of cholera epidemic in Haiti, December 22, where thousands have died due to lack of clean water and the most rudimentary health care.**

was called that because they considered their attack on Darwin and evolution as the "thin edge of the wedge" for their broader "Governing Goals": "to defeat scientific materialism and its destructive moral, cultural and political legacies" and "to replace materialistic explanations with the theistic understanding that nature and human beings are created by God."

## Science and Communist Liberation

Human evolution happened in such a way that no hominid ancestor survived; it could have been otherwise but wasn't. All humans are genetically members of the same species and there is no biological basis for the separation into races. It should be noted that Darwin was a staunch abolitionist, and during the U.S. Civil War hoped that the North would put emancipation on its banner and eliminate slavery no matter the cost in blood. As we wrote in "Hail Charles Darwin!" (*WV* No. 854, 16 September 2005):

> "America's other peculiarity among advanced capitalist countries is its deeply religious character. Nowhere else—not even in Italy where the Vatican still heavily influences civil society—is there such refractory religiosity and visceral hostility to the long-established facts of Darwinian natural selection as the motor force of evolution. Why? The absence of even a mass reformist workers party that expresses in even a blurry way that working people have needs and interests counterposed to those of their exploiters is a large part of the explanation for political backwardness in the U.S. But like everything else in this country, it also boils down to the central intersection of *race and class*. Religion in the U.S. supplies an ideology that can seemingly harmonize conflicting class interests while keeping this society with two races firmly ordered: capital above labor and white above black."

Liberals worry about the denigration of science and rationalism—how is the country to maintain a competitive position in the world if the next generation knows more about the Book of Numbers than about algebra? Marxists are materialists and take it as a given that science and religion are incompatible.

Here we come to the fundamental difference between Marxists and liberals. At bottom, liberals accept the existence of the capitalist order and their most radical demand is for reforms. Their high point was the French Revolution—liberty, fraternity, equality. All abstract ideals, behind which lurk the sanctity of private property and the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Liberals, it is true, will recognize the class struggle, but what they reject is that the proletariat should actually seize state power from the bourgeoisie.

The "liberty" so beloved by a capitalist is his liberty to make a profit, which necessarily comes through the exploitation of the workers he employs. Such exploitation is built into the capitalist system, a system that is at bottom irrational. Economic competition inevitably leads to military competition, and imperialist war. Imperialism can't be reformed—the whole system of private property has to be overthrown. The goal of the Marxists is the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which on a global scale can lay the basis for a classless communist society.

Science can open up as yet undreamt possibilities for humanity. But under capitalism today, vast resources devoted to research are for military purposes. The American ruling class was the first to own and so far the only one to use nuclear weapons, and the warheads in the U.S. arsenal are now each 20 or more times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. Even a "limited" nuclear war could have catastrophic consequences, beyond the initial effects of the explosions. Climactic changes could wreak havoc on key agricultural areas, putting the survival of the human species at risk.

The imperialists have to be removed from power and disarmed by the workers before the rulers kill us all. That will require building a revolutionary workers party, independent of all the parties of capital, including the Democrats. Obama has continued to carry on all the essential policies of the administrations before him. That is actually why the bourgeoisie put him in power. The whole racist, murderous edifice of American imperialism has to be smashed by the multiracial working class, organized into democratically elected councils and led by its Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party.

As this talk has been in defense of Marxism and science, it is worth noting Marx's words at the end of the preface to the first German edition of *Capital*: "The present society is no solid crystal, but an organism capable of change, and is constantly changing." This dialectical mode of thought inspired Lenin, Trotsky and the whole Bolshevik Party that made the October Revolution in Russia in 1917. It remained a cornerstone of Trotsky's thinking until the day he died.

In *The Prophet Unarmed* (1959) Marxist historian Isaac Deutscher cites a revealing sample of Trotsky's vision of a future society, after capitalism's demise: "The drudgery of feeding and bringing up children...will be lifted from the individual family by social initiative.... Woman will at last emerge from semi-slavery.... Socio-educational experiments ...will evolve with a now inconceivable elan. The communist way of life will not grow up blindly like coral reefs in the sea. It will be built consciously. It will be checked by critical thought. It will be directed and corrected.... No sooner will one crust begin to form itself on the human existence than it will burst under the pressure of new inventions and achievements."

The men and women of the future will no longer need religion, what Marx described as solace, the "opium of the people." And the key to unlock human potential will be science, not superstition.■

# ILA...

*(continued from page 12)*

Holt only then announced the shift in port operations. The capitalist snakes were not so much after concessions as the opportunity to deliver a sharp blow to the ILA's presence on the docks.

For decades, the Holts have gobbled up waterfront property on the Delaware River and conspired to undermine ILA contracts and break the union. At Gloucester City, the Holts, assisted by a Teamsters raiding operation, drove out the ILA in 1993 and in its place set up a "labor" front known as Independent Dock workers Local 1. This classic company union has no existence outside of a single office supplied by Holt at the terminal. Today, under the auspices of "Local 1," ruthlessly exploited workers are handling the Del Monte cargo for half the pay of ILA longshoremen.

It will take hard class struggle to bring the likes of Del Monte and the Holts to heel—and to organize the longshoremen at Gloucester City. But the pro-capitalist ILA tops are instead pursuing a consumer boycott of Del Monte products, which was announced on Labor Day. This timeworn losing strategy, which seeks to drum up liberal public opinion against the bosses, is an impotent substitute for unleashing labor's social power: its unique ability to bring production, transport and the movement of goods to a halt.

Local 1291 leaders have also encouraged union supporters to ask Pennsylvania's outgoing Democratic Party governor Ed Rendell to pressure Del Monte and the Holts to bring back the ILA jobs. One might as well play the lottery. Although they sometimes pose as "friends of labor," the Democrats no less than the Republicans are representatives of the capitalist class enemy. In fact, the Holts got their start with assistance from Democratic governor Robert Casey Sr. and later were lavished with state largesse by the very same Rendell when he was governor. The simple truth is that the class interests of the workers are irreconcilably counterposed to those of the capitalists and their political parties.

Over the years, the bosses have regularly turned to the agencies of the capitalist state, especially the courts, to shackle the ILA's power. On November 1, the federal court now considering the NYSA's lawsuit issued a permanent injunction barring the ILA from threatening or engaging in another work stoppage related to the dispute with Del Monte. Recently, the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor held "investigative" hearings focusing on the ILA, signaling its intent to set up a new round of "anti-corruption" prosecutions, which the Feds have long used to weaken the union. Meanwhile, with its mandatory background checks, the government's Transportation Worker Identification Credential program has disproportionately victimized black and immigrant workers in the name of securing the nation's ports from "terror" threats.

The renewed attacks on this industrial union, a stronghold of black labor in the South, are calculated to further undercut wages and working conditions on the East and Gulf Coast docks in advance of a shipping boom expected to follow the completion of the Panama Canal's expansion, slated for 2014. Upgrades totaling some $827 million are planned for the New York/New Jersey ports alone over the next five years. Already, ILA locals up and down the coast try to underbid each other—as well as other unions and non-union outfits—to secure contracts for "break bulk" (non-containerized) cargo, such as fruit. With industry magnates crowing over "port-to-port competition," the employers are clearly gearing up to pit ILA members against the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

The situation cries out for one industrial union of all port workers nationwide that fights for equal pay, benefits and protections at the highest standards. The fate of longshoremen on both coasts, who at present are an increasingly isolated bastion of union labor on the waterfront, is inextricably linked to the need for an aggressive campaign to organize the unorganized port truckers, warehouse and intermodal workers. This will require defending the immigrant workers who fill many of these jobs, including against the repressive "anti-terror" measures that target them. It is out of struggles to rebuild industrial unions as battalions of the multiracial working class against the bosses that a new labor leadership must be forged, one armed with a program of working-class independence from the bourgeois state and dedicated to building a workers party that fights for a workers government.■

# Free Hugo Pinell Now!

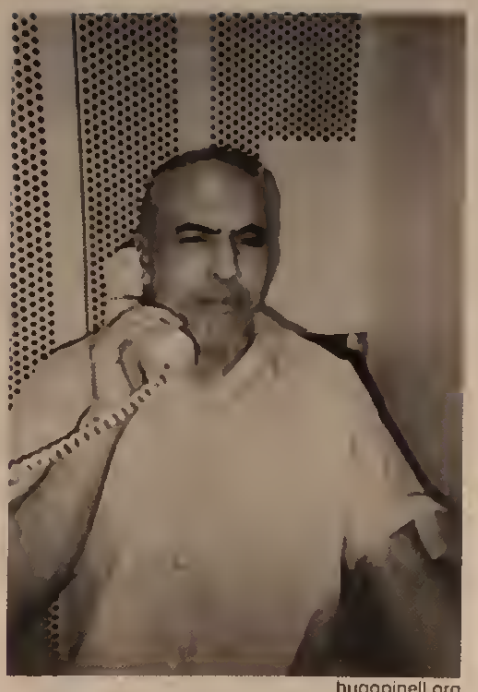
*We print below a letter sent by the Partisan Defense Committee to the California Board of Parole Heorings on 24 December 2010. Hugo Pinell, a recipient of PDC stipends for class-war prisoners, has a parole hearing scheduled for January 11. We urge our readers to send letters demanding Pinell's releose to Robert Doyle, Chairman, Californio Board of Parole Hearings, P.O. Box 4036, Sacramento, CA 95812-4036.*

The Partisan Defense Committee writes in support of the release of Hugo L.A. Pinell. Mr. Pinell has been turned down for parole numerous times despite many letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years. At one of these hearings, a commissioner berated Mr. Pinell saying "you continue to show no remorse..." This is a common ruse for denying parole for political prisoners. Mr. Pinell has no reason for "remorse" for his commendable political convictions.

This couragcous political prisoner has now spent over 45 years in incarceration, 20 of them in the notoriously repressive Pelican Bay Special Housing Unit in Crescent City. There he is subjected to high-tech sensory deprivation: 23 to 24 hours a day in a small cell, no windows, no natural light, no contact visits and prolongcd isolation. This cruel and unusual punishment must stop.

Mr. Pinell was well known to prison officials as an anti-racist leader of prison-rights organizing in the 1960s and '70s. Along with five others, known as the San Quentin Six, Mr. Pinell was framed up on charges stemming from the protests that followed the assassination of George Jackson by prison guards in August 1971. The last of the San Quentin Six still in prison, Mr. Pinell remains incarcerated for one, and only one reason: he remains true to his vision of a society finally rid of racist oppression.

At his last hearing, the Board vindictively overstepped their bounds and illegally attempted to deny Mr. Pinell another parole hearing for fifteen years. We demand the abuse by the parole board cease and that Mr. Pinell be released immediately and unconditionally.■



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# WikiLeaks...

*(continued from page 2)*

the vendetta against him threatens an ominous further attack on free speech, press freedoms and other democratic rights. Commenting on the case of an intelligence consultant hit with the Espionage Act for exposing what he considered wasteful expenditures on eavesdropping programs, the *New York Times* (11 June 2010) noted that "the Obama administration is proving more aggressive than the Bush administration in seeking to punish unauthorized leaks." As we have repeatedly stressed, Barack Obama, who came into office with broad support from liberals and the left, is simply carrying out his duties as U.S. imperialism's Commander-in-Chief—from expanding the murderous occupation of Afghanistan to stepping up attacks on democratic rights in the name of thc "war on terror."

### The Bolsheviks vs. Secret Diplomacy

The furious reaction of the Obama administration to the WikiLeaks exposures points to the importance the rulers of capitalist imperialism place on secret diplomacy, which, as revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky explained in November 1917, "is a necessary tool for a propertied minority which is compelled to deceive the majority in order to subject it to its interests." Trotsky made this point in a statement he issued as Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet workers state that had just issued out of the October Revolution. Trotsky was announcing the publication and abrogation of secret treaties hatched by the prior tsarist regime and the bourgeois Provisional Government with their imperialist allies.

Prior to the proletariat's seizure of power, the Bolshevik Party had demanded the abolition of secret diplomacy and the publication of secret treaties as part of its revolutionary proletarian opposition to World War I, a conflict between competing imperialists for redivision of the world. This demand was raised against the Provisional Government, which, coming to power after the overthrow of the tsar in the February Revolution of 1917, continued Russia's participation in the war.

Immediatcly following the October Revolution, the workers state issued a decree on peace removing Russia from the war and demanding of the belligerents a "just, democratic" peace without annexations or indemnities. Two weeks later, the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* began publication of treaties concluded during the war. Historian E.H. Carr noted in Volume Three of *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923* that publication of the treaties in English in the *Monchester Guordian* galvanized British radicals and "created a sensation in the United States." In his Canton speech, Debs declared, "When the Bolsheviki came into power and went through the archives they found and exposed the secret treaties—the treaties that were made between the Czar and the French government, the British government and the Italian government, proposing, after the victory was achieved, to dismember the German Empire and destroy the Central Powers. These treaties have never been denied nor repudiated."

The October Revolution was a beacon of liberation for the exploited and the oppressed in the advanced capitalist countries and in the colonial and semi-colonial world. Along with the Soviet government's renunciation of predatory agreements reached by prior regimes, publication of the treaties helped spark waves of struggle by those under the boot heel of the imperialists, whose dirty deals were now laid bare.

One of the first treaties to be exposed was the May 1916 agreement between Britain's Mark Sykes and France's François Georges-Picot, which plotted the carving up of the Ottoman Empire in anticipation of its defeat, along with Germany in WWI. Tsarist Russia approved this pact on condition that it receive part of eastern Anatolia and Constantinople (Istanbul) with its Straits of Dardanelles, a critically strategic passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The exposure of this deal, which was revised at the end of the war in favor of Britain, had an electrifying effect in the Near East, whose peoples expected that the Ottomans' defeat would result in their self-determination. Strikes and demonstrations swept Egypt in 1919, and the following year in Mesopotamia (today's Iraq) the masses stood up to the more than 130,000 British troops deployed to occupy the territory. The Soviet government also disowned plans by the tsarist regime and the imperialists to divide up Persia (Iran).

A similar impact was seen in China, whole chunks of which had been carved up by the Western and Japanese imperialists. The Soviets published a secret treaty signed by Japan and Russia in 1916 that upheld a series of prior secret agreements dividing Manchuria in northeast China into Japanese and Russian spheres of influence. Other areas, such as Inner Mongolia, were similarly demarcated. The Bolsheviks' renunciation of tsarist annexations and machinations in China made a deep impression on key radical intellectuals and among students returning to China after the war. Many of the students had illusions in U.S. president Woodrow Wilson's promises of "self-determination" and social justice for all peoples. However, with the 1919 Versailles Treaty, the U.S. and other imperialists awarded all of defeated Germany's territory in China to the Japancse Empire, sparking a wave of mass protest known as the May 4th Movement, some of whose leaders went on to help found the Chinese Communist Party.

Imperial War Museum

**Soviet leader Leon Trotsky arriving at Brest-Litovsk talks with Germany, January 1918. As Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Trotsky oversaw publication of *Collection of Secret Documents of the Former Ministry of Foreign Affairs* shortly after October Revolution.**

### A Revolutionary Perspective

A number of reformist "socialist" organizations around the world have referred positively to the Soviets' publication of secret treaties in light of the WikiLeaks exposures, only to draw a continuum between the two. While performing a valuable service to the exploited and the oppressed, Julian Assange is what he is: a bourgeois liberal who vainly seeks to rid the imperialist system of its worst excesses through exposure of its crimes. The Bolsheviks had a different purpose. By exposing the deeds of the previous Russian rulers and their imperialist patrons and allies, they helped educate the working class in Russia and internationally. Their program was to extend the October Revolution internationally, which they knew was the only road to achieving a socialist society. However, the revolutionary wave that accompanied and followed the end of World War I in Germany and elsewhere in Europe failed to overthrow the rule of capital, centrally due to the lack of the kind of steeled vanguard party that V.I. Lenin had built in Russia.

While maintaining its revolutionary internationalist perspective and program, the early Soviet workers state itself needed to engage in diplomatic dealings with the capitalist world. Thus it signed the Rapallo Pact, which arranged for the German military and its industrial suppliers to set up operations on Soviet territory. While this gave the German militarists a chance to rearm, it also provided the means to begin the mechanization and modernization of the Red Army and related branches of Soviet industry. This part of the Rapallo Pact had to be kept secret from the victorious Entente powers. As Trotsky wrote of the revolutionary Bolshevik regime: "Wherever it could, it, of course, deceived the class enemies; on the other hand it told the toilers the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Only thanks to this did it succeed in winning their trust to a degree never before achieved by any other party in the world" (*Their Morals and Ours*, 1938).

With the defeat of the 1923 German Revolution, the Soviet workers state, which had suffered greatly from the effects of the interimperialist war and the Civil War that followed the revolution, found itself isolated. Under conditions of scarcity, a new conservative and bureaucratized layer in the party and state apparatus led by Joseph Stalin came to the fore, usurping political power beginning in 1923-24. In place of the banner of world socialist revolution, Stalin in 1924 put forward the false dogma of "socialism in one country," out of which the corollary of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism inevitably developed. Over time, and against the opposition of Trotsky and his followers


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# Spain...

*(continued from page 12)*

is sending a message to the international financial markets that it is prepared to use naked state repression to cow the trade unions into submission. The *Wall Street Journal* (8 December 2010) observed with approval that "the government's severe response has shored up the position of Spain's embattled prime minister and could give him more support in passing reforms." It further notes that the cost of government borrowing, which had been soaring in the weeks before the state of emergency, began to fall immediately afterward. The government's "reforms" include plans to raise the retirement age by two years, to 67, and eliminate the pitiful €426 ($570) monthly payment to the long-term unemployed. This in a country with an unemployment rate of 20 percent, the highest in the euro zone.

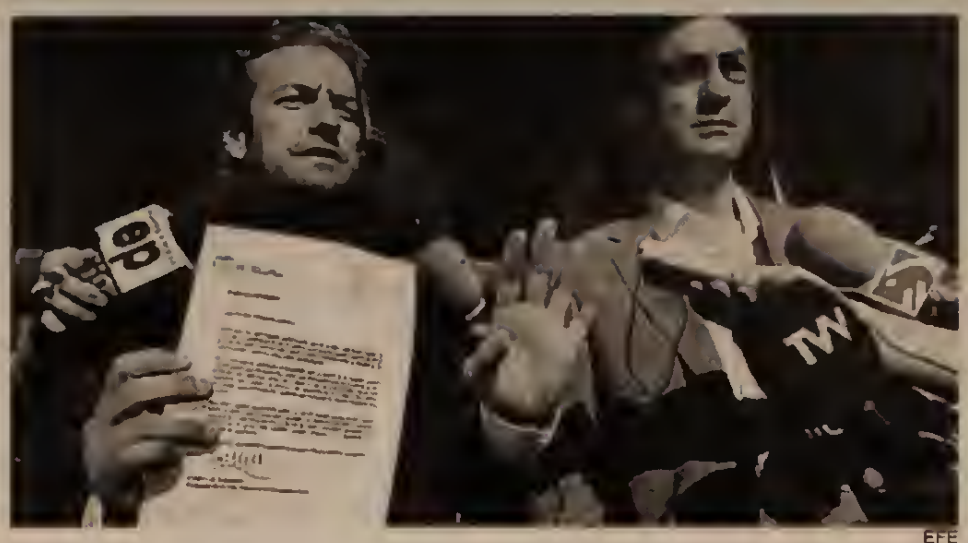
The assault on the air traffic controllers poses a deadly threat to the organized labor movement. Especially given Spain's important tourism sector, workers in the airline industry are strategically placed and have enormous social power. At the same time, the trade unions are generally divided by affiliation to political parties, which weakens their capacity to struggle. What's needed instead is to unite all workers in industrial unions, including a single union of airline workers embracing pilots, controllers, mechanics, baggage handlers and cabin crews.

The state of emergency should have been met by massive protests by the country's powerful trade-union federations—the General Union of Workers (UGT), aligned with the PSOE, and the Workers Commissions (CC.OO.), associated with the United Left coalition (Izquierda Unida—IU), in which the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) is the dominant force. Instead, the union bureaucrats in both federations, which are loyal to the PSOE government, scandalously chimed in with Zapatero's attacks on the strikers. UGT leader Cándido Méndez denounced the controllers' action as "in no way justified," while in a December 6 Web posting the CC.OO. described the action as "intolerable" and "an act of grave irresponsibility deserving of 'our most forceful and radical rejection'."

Facing the most ferocious attacks on their jobs and livelihoods in decades, workers across Europe, notably in Greece and France, have waged major class battles. But the workers' struggles have been undermined by the political bankruptcy of their reformist misleaders, who accept the need for capitalist austerity, while seeking to sugarcoat its effects. This underlines the need to forge a revolutionary leadership of the working class. Based on the understanding that the interests of the workers and those of the bosses are irreconcilable, such a leadership would fight for what workers need, not for what the bosses say they can afford. This would be part of the struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party who fought to maintain the program of the October Revolution, the Communist Parties were transformed from instruments of revolution into instruments of class collaboration.

Trotsky observed in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), his classic analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy, that "foreign policy is everywhere and always a continuation of domestic policy, for it is conducted by the same ruling class and pursues the same historic goals. The degeneration of the governing stratum in the Soviet Union could not but be accompanied by a corresponding change of aims and methods in Soviet diplomacy." While unconditionally defending the degenerated Soviet workers state against imperialism and domestic capitalist counterrevolution, Trotskyists fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and return to the road of the October Revolution.

The bureaucracy's betrayals led to the ultimate undoing of the October Revolution through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. In the aftermath, the imperialists who crow about the "death of communism" are ever more brazen in their rampages from Iraq to Afghanistan and in their assault on democratic rights and the livelihood of workers "at home." Liberals and the reformist left seize upon revelations of the (everyday) workings of the capitalist rulers—disinformation, secret political police, assassination, etc.—to pressure the imperialists to adopt more "humane" policies. Our aim is to build a workers party of the Bolshevik type. Imperialism and its savage wars and occupations, sold through systematic lying and duplicity, will be defeated only through victorious proletarian revolution which, extended internationally, will lay the basis for the liberation of all humanity in a future communist world.■



EFE

**Madrid: Air traffic controllers union president Camilo Cela (right) and communications secretary César Cabo (left) speak to press during contract negotiations in August. Strikers face up to eight years' imprisonment.**

grounded in the Marxist understanding that the capitalist system must be overthrown through socialist revolution.

In Spain, the leaders of both the UGT and CC.OO. are committed to the defense of the interests of their "own" capitalist rulers. UGT leader Méndez has baldly declared: "Social peace is the birthright and the responsibility of everyone. We are not the ones breaking the social peace and we do not want to do so in the future" (abc.es, 23 February 2010). In June, when Zapatero announced a new labor law attacking workers' rights, UGT and CC.OO. leaders called for a one-day general strike to be held...three months later, which amounted to seeking the government's permission for the strike. The September 29 general strike was organized under the slogan "Not Like This" and called for a "fair and balanced way out of the crisis."

## Forge a Trotskyist Party in Spain!

To justify their class treason in refusing to defend the air traffic controllers, the UGT and CC.OO. misleaders maintain that USCA is not a trade union and that the controllers are pampered and highly paid. Reformist left groups in Spain, which routinely look to the PSOE to defend "democracy" and keep out the bourgeois right, have also joined in the denunciation of the air traffic controllers. Despite much handwringing over the state of emergency by the United Left, its parliamentary deputy Gaspar Llamazares denounced the controllers' action as "an abuse of power against the workers" that leaves the unions "weaker to defend labour and social rights."

In contrast, a 5 December 2010 press release by STAVLA, a flight attendants union, recognized what is at stake for the union movement. Offering unconditional support, STAVLA expresses the hope that the air traffic controllers'

> "VALIANT action and courage serve to wake up a society that is asleep, individualist and depressed in the fight for its economic and labor rights in the country with the highest rate of unemployment in Europe. If we fall into the Government's devious manipulation and applaud their action, we will have allowed this attack on the fundamental rights of all Spanish workers to succeed and be entrenched forever."

Spain's air traffic controllers are a highly paid white-collar group on the margins of the labor movement. But if Zapatero gets away with this outrageous assault on the USCA, his government will take it as a green light for further attacks on the working class as a whole. Indeed, last summer Madrid's right-wing regional government threatened to use the military to break a Metro strike.

Zapatero's attack on the controllers, and the response of the trade-union bureaucrats and reformists, bring to mind U.S. president Ronald Reagan's 1981 union-busting attack on the PATCO air traffic controllers union. In response to their strike, some 12,000 PATCO members were fired and their leaders dragged off to jail in shackles. As in Spain today, the trade unions had the social power to shut down the airports and defeat this attack. But the union misleaders in the U.S. treacherously refused to mobilize that power, which emboldened the bourgeoisie to carry out massive attacks on all of labor.

The Spanish government and Aena have imposed horrendous working conditions on the air traffic controllers, who are forced to work overtime as a matter of course because the bosses refuse to hire enough of them. These conditions are a direct threat to air safety, a situation that is drastically worsened by the state of emergency. The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) issued a statement saying: "Given the duress under which our Spanish colleagues are forced to work, IFATCA declares that the safety of Spanish airspace and airports is severely compromised while this military rule is in force."

While Zapatero's martial law measures are an abrogation of democratic rights, the response of reformists has been to promote illusions in bourgeois democracy. Marxists understand that the government is the executive committee of the ruling class. As Lenin explained in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918), "There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a 'violation of public order,' and actually in case the exploited class 'violates' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner." The capitalist state, which exists to defend bourgeois rule, cannot be reformed and made to work in the interests of the oppressed; it must be overthrown by workers revolution and replaced by a workers state.

On December 10, in opposition to Madrid's right-wing regional government, leaders of the UGT and CC.OO. in Madrid organized a public reading of articles of the Spanish Constitution, which formally guarantees the right to work and the right to strike. Upheld by the PSOE and the PCE, the Constitution proclaims the Spanish state to be a parliamentary monarchy. The present king, Juan Carlos de Borbón, was handpicked by Franco himself to succeed him as head of state. The Constitution also enshrines the continued oppression of national minorities—especially the Basque and Catalan peoples—in the name of the "indissoluble unity of the Spanish Nation, common and indivisible motherland of all Spaniards." The king is no mere ornament but the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. It was Juan Carlos who signed the royal decree declaring the state of emergency against the air traffic controllers.

In the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, the PSOE and PCE, as well as the anarchists and the centrist Workers Party of Marxist Unification, paved the way for the dictatorship of the butcher Franco by liquidating a proletarian revolution and subordinating the working class to the "democratic" bourgeoisie (see "Trotskyism vs. Popular Frontism in the Spanish Civil War," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009). After the death of the dictator in November 1975, the reformists again came to the rescue of the capitalists as a powerful wave of strikes threatened to shake the bourgeois order to its foundations. That betrayal too was carried out in the name of "democracy."

The Spanish monarchy, the legacy of Francoism and the whole capitalist system can and must be swept away by workers revolution. What's necessary is the building of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to lead the proletariat at the head of all the oppressed in the struggle for a workers government that will expropriate the capitalist bloodsuckers and begin the construction of an egalitarian socialist order based on a massive expansion of productive forces. Such a party will champion the right of self-determination for oppressed nations, full citizenship rights for all immigrants, the emancipation of women and full democratic rights for homosexuals. For a federation of workers republics in the Iberian peninsula! For a Socialist United States of Europe!■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**New York** ..... Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
**Public Office:** 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318

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WORKERS VANGUARD

## Port Bosses Sue Union for $5 Million

# ILA Under Attack Over Strike to Save Jobs

### Labor Must Defend the ILA!

Seeking to punish the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) for a two-day walkout last September, the New York Shipping Association (NYSA) bosses and 18 ocean carriers filed a lawsuit on December 3 in a New Jersey federal court demanding over $5 million in "damages." In a notable display of labor power, ILA members had shut down operations on the docks in the Philadelphia and New York City areas on September 28-29 to protest Del Monte Fresh Produce Co.'s plans to tear up its contract with Philly-based ILA Local 1291 and move their jobs to a facility with a company union.

The work stoppage—the biggest job action by dock workers on the East Coast since a 1986 strike—was a refreshing example of labor actually fighting back against the bosses' union-busting attacks. But in the end, Del Monte got its way, and now the waterfront bosses are demanding that the ILA pay for its "illegal" work stoppage. The lawsuit is a dangerous attack on the ILA and all dock workers, as well as a warning to the entire union movement. All of labor must take a stand in defense of the longshoremen and demand: *Hands off the ILA!*

Journal of Commerce

**September 2010: Longshoremen from Philadelphia on picket line at Port Newark, New Jersey, in fight to defend union jobs.**

The September strike pitted members of Local 1291 against both a produce company reviled around the world for its attacks on workers' rights and the notorious anti-union terminal operators in the Holt family. Del Monte was threatening to shift the unloading of its ships from an ILA terminal in Camden, New Jersey, to a nearby Holt-owned facility in Gloucester City. Facing the prospect of losing 200 or more jobs, Local 1291 longshoremen set up informational picket lines at the ports. Some 4,500 ILA and other workers, including truckers organized by the Teamsters as well as independent truckers, honored the pickets. Twelve ships piled with containers were idled in New York Harbor on the first day alone.

A few hours into the strike, a federal judge issued an injunction ordering the ILA to resume work. But pickets stayed up for a second day in defiance of the injunction, and of top ILA officials who urged longshoremen to stop picketing. Workers ended the job action only after the major shippers agreed to enter into negotiations over Del Monte's use of non-union labor. But Del Monte was dead set on driving out the union. From closing newly unionized processing plants in Hawaii to brutally harassing and systematically firing union leaders on its plantations in Latin America, this multinational conglomerate is a committed union-buster.

In Camden, according to the union, the ILA longshoremen who unloaded Del Monte's ships had worked at the same wage rate for the past 19 years and were saddled with the stingiest pension plan in the industry. At Del Monte's urging, the ILA brass last summer offered up massive concessions, amounting to *$5 million per year* in wage cuts and other givebacks from Local 1291, in order to keep its contract. Smelling blood, Del Monte and

*continued on page 9*

## "Socialist" Government Imposes Martial Law to Break Strike

# Defend Air Traffic Controllers!

### Spain

On December 4, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero declared war on Spain's working class by imposing a "state of emergency" in the airports in response to a work stoppage by air traffic controllers. Under martial law measures not invoked since the end of the bloody dictatorship of General Francisco Franco in the 1970s, members of the Union of Air Traffic Controllers (USCA) were frog-marched by armed police from the Madrid hotel in which they were meeting and forced to man the control towers. Controllers were forced to report for work under threat of arrest; those who took part in the work stoppages now face jail terms of up to eight years for sedition. To prevent strikes over the Christmas holiday period, the emergency measures have been extended to January 15.

It is in the vital interests of workers in Spain, and across Europe as a whole, to defend the air traffic controllers. *An injury to one is an injury to all! Drop all charges against air traffic controllers!*

Controllers have noted that the government has been carrying out calculated provocations in order to provide a pretext for a crackdown. Early last year, it increased the controllers' annual work hours, limited overtime and slashed wages by half. Most air traffic controllers in Spain worked more than the legal maximum of 1,670 hours last year, and under the government's new rules sick days and time off no longer count toward their annual work hours. The controllers staged last month's mass sick-out only hours after the government announced attacks on their working conditions as part of the planned privatization of 49 percent of Aena, the country's aviation authority.

AP photos

**December 4: National police occupying entrance of Madrid's Barajas Airport were mobilized by Spanish prime minister Zapatero (inset) to crush controllers strike.**

The PSOE government's drive against the air traffic controllers comes in the context of the capitalist financial crisis that has been wracking European Union countries. It follows hard on the heels of the €85 billion ($114 billion) EU/IMF bailout of the Irish banks and a few months after the €110 billion bailout of Greece in exchange for the imposition of savage austerity measures. Spain's budget deficit is the third-highest in the euro zone after Greece and Ireland, and according to an article on the *Financial Times* Web site (15 December 2010): "Market prices suggest there is a one-in-four chance that Spain will default over the next five years."

The same article reports:

> "Analysts are therefore examining the previously unthinkable possibility that Spain will need to seek a bail-out from the €750bn available from the European financial stability facility, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union, or even negotiate a default. Either option would have grave consequences given that the Spanish economy is larger than those of Greece, Portugal and Ireland put together."

By invoking military measures against the air traffic controllers, the government

*continued on page 11*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 972

21 January 2011


## Mississippi's Scott Sisters

# Racist U.S. Justice: Cruel and Unusual

King/Clarion-Ledger

**Jamie and Gladys Scott at January 7 press conference in Jackson following their release from prison.**

In Octoher 1994, two black women, sisters Jamie and Gladys Scott, were sentenced to ***double life prison terms*** for their alledged involvement in an $11 armed robbery. On January 7 the Scott sisters were freed after 16 years of incarceration. But, with their sentences suspended, they will be on parole for the rest of their lives and have to pay the state $52 monthly. Benjamin Todd Jealous, president of the NAACP, proclaimed, "The victory of their release encourages us to press on in our nationwide efforts to convince more governors to use their clemency powers to free more people who desperately deserve it." This is the pathetic voice of black petty-bourgeois protest inspired by the administration of Barack Obama, chief overseer of racist U.S. capitalism, pleading on behalf of a few who "deserve" when 2.3 million people, 70 percent black or Latino, languish in prison hellholes.

In Mississippi the legacy of slavery is self-evident in its bloody history. The viciously vindictive frame-up of the Scott sisters reeks of the stench of this legacy. The Scott sisters had no prior criminal record. Prosecution witnesses revealed that they were all threatened by the deputy sheriff and forced to sign false

*continued on page 11*

## New York City

## Bloomberg's Snow Job on Working People

# Beat Back Attack on Public Workers Unions!

AP photos

**Brooklyn, January 3: Eight days after blizzard, trash is picked up for first time. As Mayor Bloomberg and Sanitation Commissioner Doherty (shown in inset at December 29 press conference) caught flak for woeful response to storm, City Hall turned on sanitation workers.**

The administration of multibillionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg enraged working people throughout New York City with its criminally negligent response to the Christmas weekend blizzard. Having already reduced the municipal workforce, the city basically did nothing to prepare for a major storm that everyone knew was going to hit. While most Manhattan streets serving tourists and the wealthy were cleared within a day, many in the outer boroughs did not see a snow plow for days after the storm. Unplowed streets were littered with abandoned cars, along with 100 snow plows and over 200 amhulances. Some 1,000 buses were stuck, their drivers told to stay inside the vehicles for hours on end by Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) management. Untold numbers of the elderly and sick were trapped in the subways. At least two people died in the conditions created by city officials. Meanwhile, Bloomberg blithely encouraged tourists to take in a Broadway show!

As anger over the disaster mounted, the capitalist politicians of the Repuhlican and Democratic parties cynically tried to pin responsibility on municipal workers. Along with the rabidly anti-union *New York Post*, Republican city councilman Dan Halloran, citing anonymous sources, accused sanitation workers of having staged a slowdown in solidarity with supervisors who were facing demotion, prompting one worker to tell the *Daily News* (5 January), "We don't care about management on a good day, never mind during a blizzard."

With outgoing Democratic governor David Paterson calling for a criminal investigation, four separate probes were launched—by the NYC Department of Investigation (DOI), by the Queens and Brooklyn district attorneys and hy the Brooklyn U.S. Attorney's office. In addition to the "slowdown," workers are reportedly being investigated for allegedly "padding overtime." On January 3, the DOI issued a fink memo warning transportation workers that "they are ohligated to come forward and report information about misconduct."

Part of a nationwide drive against public sector unions, the obscene witchhunting of NYC public workers should be fought by every union in the city. It was the municipal workers who responded heroically under enormously difficult circumstances to help people get through the storm. Emergency medical service (EMS) workers, unable to drive their ambulances down snowbound streets, often carried stricken residents on stretchers for blocks. As for "padding overtime," sanitation workers have toiled 21 straight days following the storm, often working at least 12-hour shifts, to dig the city out and remove trash.

As one sanitation worker told the *Daily News*, the city's response to the blizzard was "a perfect storm of fewer men, inferior equipment, 70-mph winds and a political failure to declare a snow emergency," adding, "this was all about money." Snow plows were fitted with cheap, inferior chains that snapped, sometimes ripping tires off the rims. Sanitation workers were given shovels that were unassemhled—and missing the

*continued on page 10*

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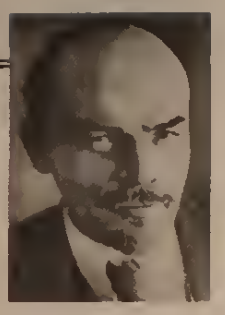
TROTSKY

## FROM THE ARCHIVES OF MARXISM



LENIN

# Honor Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht

In the tradition of the early Communist International, each January we commemorate the "Three Ls": Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, who died on 21 January 1924, and revolutionary Marxists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who were assassinated in Berlin on 15 January 1919 by the reactionary Freikorps as part of the German Social Democratic government's suppression of the Spartakist uprising.

Although not well known today, Karl Liebknecht's name is synonymous with intransigent opposition to one's "own" bourgeoisie in the crucible of imperialist war. Despite his individual opposition to German imperialism from the outset of World War I, on 4 August 1914 Liebknecht submitted to the discipline of the Social Democratic Party and voted for war credits along with the rest of the party fraction in the Reichstag (parliament). But Liebknecht became increasingly vocal in his opposition to the party's betrayal of the proletariat. When the party fraction resolved to support a new vote for the Kaiser's military budget at the Reichstag session of 2 December 1914, Liebknecht broke ranks and cast the sole vote opposing war credits.

Liebknecht was prohibited from delivering a statement motivating his vote on the floor of the Reichstag or having it printed in the body's official record. Barred from the German press, the statement was published in a Dutch socialist newspaper and translated into English in the Socialist *New York Call*. Below we reprint the statement as it appeared in the February 1915 issue of the U.S. leftist journal *The Masses*. Liebknecht's stand inspired proletarian militants in Germany and internationally, not least in Russia, where the working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party would seize power in the October Revolution of 1917.

In a May 1915 leaflet, Liebknecht declared, "The main enemy is at home," which for generations afterward became the watchword for revolutionaries at a time of war between imperialist powers. As he denounced the slaughter of World War I at a May Day rally in 1916, Liebknecht was dragged from the platform and thrown into prison on charges of treason. Released in October 1918, Liebknecht along with Luxemburg founded the German Communist Party at the end of the year. They were assassinated two weeks later.

Willy Romer

**January 1919: Communist leader Karl Liebknecht addressing Berlin workers and soldiers on eve of Spartakist uprising.**

In honoring the Three Ls, we fight to carry on their revolutionary tradition. As Liebknecht declared the day before his murder: "Whether or not we are alive when it arrives, our program will live, and it will reign in a world of redeemed humanity. Despite everything!"

* * *

My vote against the war credit is based upon the following considerations:

This war, which none of the peoples engaged therein has wished, is not caused in the interest of the prosperity of the German or any other nation. This is an imperialistic war, a war for the domination of the world market, for the political domination over important fields of operation for industrial and bank capital. On the part of the competition in armaments this is a war mutually fostered by German and Austrian war parties in the darkness of half absolutism and secret diplomacy in order to steal a march on the adversary.

At the same time this war is a Bonapartistic effort to blot out the growing labor movement. This has been demonstrated with ever-increasing plainness in the past few months, in spite of a deliberate purpose to confuse the heads.

The German motto, "Against Czarism," as well as the present English and French cries, "Against Militarism," have the deliberate purpose of bringing into play in behalf of race hatred the noblest inclinations and the revolutionary feelings and ideals of the people. To Germany, the accomplice of Czarism, an example of political backwardness down to the present day, does not belong the calling of the liberator of nations. The liberation of the Russian as well as the German people should be their own task.

This war is not a German defense war. Its historical character and its development thus far make it impossible to trust the assertion of a capitalistic government that the purpose for which credits are asked is the defense of the fatherland.

The credits for succor have my approval, with the understanding that the asked amount seems far from being sufficient. Not less eagerly do I vote for everything that will alleviate the hard lot of our brothers in the field, as well as that of the wounded and the sick, for whom I have the deepest sympathy. But I do vote against the demanded war credits, under protest against the war and against those who are responsible for it and have caused it, against the capitalistic purposes for which it is being used, against the annexation plans, against the violation of the Belgian and Luxemburg neutrality, against the unlimited authority of rulers of war and against the neglect of the social and political duties of which the government and the ruling classes stand convicted.■

# Letters

# On Global Warming

*The first of the following three letters was written in German in response to Part One of "Capitalism and Global Warming" (WV Nos. 965 and 966, 24 September and 8 October 2010). It was forwarded to WV by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany.*

Hannover
7 October 2010

Dear friends,

I emphatically reject your new position on so-called "global warming." It is utterly impossible for scientific proletarian research into objective climate changes to arrive at a definitive position on whether there will be a new "ice age" or "global warming" in 2060.

All the gobbledygook of the bourgeoisie so far, from Al Gore to "Queen" Elizabeth II, is the ideology of a moribund class.

Every class has a class interest in influencing nature. The capitalists are, for instance, attempting to engineer potatoes or corn, forcing farmers to buy new seed from the capitalists year after year. Normally, farmers get their seed out of their own harvest. Thus the bourgeoisie puts its class interest above that of humanity.

In the case of "global warming," the bourgeoisie, with its vicious unscientific "theory," $CO_2$ and "greenhouse," is attempting to slow down, if not to halt, scientific–technical progress and the further industrialization of entire continents. Of course capitalist production and reproduction destroy the oceans and thereby the very basis of life on this planet. This is undeniable. However, global warming is an ideological weapon, not an objective reality. I would characterize "global warming" as the new Malthusianism. Malthusianism was also an ideology of class rule that could not be proven in reality, although countless statistics were cited as "proof."

C.M.

* * *

16 October 2010

In Capitalism and Global Warming, Part II, published 10/8/10, WV 966, you misapply a paraphrase from Trotsky's Transitional Program. Trotsky wrote there that we should not be interested in advising the bourgeoisie how to save the capitalist economic system. You write that "Revolutionary Marxists have no interest in advising the bourgeoisie on how best to meet its energy needs," implying that we should not even consider how we

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**No. 972** **21 January 2011**

## Down With Bloody Repression of "Red Shirts," Minorities!

# Thailand: For a Workers and Peasants Government!

## Abolish the Monarchy!

AP photos

**Left: "Red Shirt" supporter shot in head by military being carried into Bangkok hospital, 19 May 2010. Right: Bus in flames during protest in support of ousted prime minister Thaksin, 13 April 2009.**

*The following article is reprinted from* Australasian Spartacist *No. 211 (Summer 2010/11), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League.*

On 9 January, up to 40,000 demonstrators led by the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD—more popularly known as the Red Shirts) rallied in Thailand's capital, Bangkok, to commemorate supporters killed in the bloody crackdown on anti-government protests in mid-May. For weeks during April-May, tens of thousands had rallied behind the UDD, supporters of exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, in protests demanding new elections. Drawing in masses of urban and rural poor, demonstrators sustained repeated attacks by state forces against their occupation centred on Ratchaprasong intersection in the commercial heart of the capital. Then on 19 May, under the orders of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, the Thai military mobilised armoured vehicles and thousands of troops to brutally disperse the protest. Ninety-one people were killed and up to 1,900 injured in the bloody

Australasian SPARTACIST

repression against the weeks-long demonstration. The slingshots, bamboo spears, Molotov cocktails and other more conventional weapons of the demonstrators were no match for the tanks and live ammunition of the Thai army, which, along with the police, has a long history of murderous suppression of worker and student protests, separatist and leftist insurgencies.

Following the crackdown, a pall of terror fell over Thailand. Hundreds of Red Shirt protesters were rounded up and imprisoned, many detained under an Emergency Decree imposed in early April. The government froze bank accounts of suspected Red Shirt supporters, raided and closed down radio stations and blocked over 100,000 websites. Twenty-five people, including the exiled Thaksin and other leaders were charged with terrorism-related offences that can carry the death penalty.

As revolutionary Marxists, the International Communist League defends the Red Shirt protesters against ongoing bloody state repression while at the same time standing in political opposition to this bourgeois-populist movement, which is defined by its support to, and from, Thaksin, a billionaire telecommunications mogul. Its aims and politics are counterposed to the interests of the workers and rural toilers who have rallied behind it. It is necessary to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party to mobilise the proletariat, standing at the head of all the downtrodden and oppressed, against all wings of the Thai bourgeoisie in the struggle to overthrow the exploitative capitalist system through socialist revolution.

Thaksin, who was ousted from government in a military coup in 2006, was the first Thai bourgeois political leader whose wealth and base of support lay outside the Bangkok elite. Describing themselves as *phrai* (serf), and sneeringly referred to as "savages" and "buffalos" by sections of the elite, many Red Shirt supporters are disenfranchised peasants from Thailand's poverty-stricken north and northeast. Thaksin garnered his broad support among the urban and rural poor following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, which hit Thailand particularly hard. The crash saw real wages plummet by up to 40 percent and over two million workers lose their jobs in just a few months. Many were forced back to rural villages or into sweatshops and informal or casual work to survive. Before the year ended, the prime minister resigned in the face of the continuing economic turmoil and burgeoning street protests by workers, peasants and the middle classes. The following year Thaksin founded his *Thai Rak Thai* (Thais Love Thais) party. It put forward a nationalist, populist program that promised to ameliorate conditions for the masses, particularly in the rural areas. Elected prime minister in 2001, Thaksin delivered on many of his reform pledges, including a debt moratorium for peasants and a heavily subsidised universal healthcare system.

For Thaksin, these reforms served to co-opt and contain plebeian discontent within the framework of capitalism, ensuring the necessary social and economic stability to attract imperialist investment back to Thailand, and with it a smooth flow of profits for himself and his cronies. Corruption, nepotism and authoritarianism prospered while Thaksin was in power. A former police officer, he undermined the power of the entrenched bureaucracy by centralising management of government affairs in his own hands and that of his *Thai Rak Thai* party. He exercised tight control over the media and embarked on sweeping anti-union privatisations as well as repressive domestic campaigns especially targeting ethnic minorities. These measures were designed to suppress any restiveness among the population while mobilising the majority behind greater Thai nationalism.

Following Thaksin's re-election in a second landslide victory in 2005, bourgeois opposition elements coalesced around the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). This included support from Abhisit's Democrat Party, sections of the military and bureaucracy, businessmen and others who felt threatened by Thaksin's government including some public sector trade-union leaders. Known as the Yellow Shirts (the colour associated with the king), PAD seized on a tax scandal involving Thaksin in early 2006 to escalate protests against his regime. In September, while out of the country, Thaksin was deposed in a military coup—the eighteenth in the 60-plus year reign of King Bhumibol.

With the banning of *Thai Rak Thai*, its leaders regrouped as the People's Power Party (PPP) and managed to form a coalition government after junta-approved elections in late 2007. The PAD Yellow Shirts launched a new round of protests, storming Government House [the prime minister's office] and blockading two international airports, while security forces largely refrained from intervening. Clashes occurred with Red Shirts who had mobilised on the streets. In a December 2008 judicial coup, the Thai Constitutional Court dissolved the PPP, leading to the installation of Abhisit as prime minister. Branding the Red Shirt opposition "communists" and "destroyers of Thailand," the government of the Oxford-educated Abhisit has ruled with an iron fist ever since. Abhisit immediately slashed Thaksin's healthcare scheme by 23 percent and bolstered his regime with a paramilitary band of armed thugs, known as the Blue Shirts, who serve to intimidate government opponents.

Without giving any political support to Thaksin, it was necessary for the proletariat

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# Thailand...

*(continued from page 3)*

to oppose the 2006 military coup—which threatened the ability of the working class to organise in its own interests and struck a blow at all the oppressed—and to defend the reforms gained under Thaksin. Concretely this would have meant *militarily* siding with Thaksin and his supporters against the coup, and with the masses on the streets, while fighting for the proletariat to emerge under its own banner.

### Thaksin Shinawatra: Blood-Drenched Bourgeois Nationalist

Bourgeois nationalists such as Thaksin are committed to defence of the capitalist order, which necessarily means enforcing the exploitation of the masses and the plunder of resources to enhance the power and the profits of the bourgeoisie and their imperialist masters. As prime minister, Thaksin launched two savage domestic campaigns. His "war on drugs" resulted in some 3,000 extrajudicial killings by the police and military. Many were also slaughtered in his bloody campaign against the Malay Muslim minority in the southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and parts of Songkhla, which he kept under martial law. The ferocity of the repression is captured by the events in Tak Bai on 25 October 2004. After firing on a demonstration in the town, killing at least seven people and wounding many more, Thai security forces then rounded up over 1,300 Muslims. With their hands bound behind their backs, the detainees were stacked on top of one another like cordwood in the back of trucks and driven to a military detention camp six hours away. By the end of the journey up to 85 prisoners had died of beatings, suffocation and kidney damage. Thaksin Shinawatra responded to this slaughter by praising the "good work" of the security forces.

While Thailand was never colonised by the imperialist powers, its borders nevertheless reflect the struggles between British and French colonialism in Southeast Asia. Thailand, or Siam as it was formerly known, emerged as an independent state in the late 19th century mainly as a buffer between French and British imperialism. The 1909 Anglo-Siamese Treaty handed several Malay states to the British while allowing Siam to retain the four states that it still holds today. The Malay state of Patani, which had been largely self-governing while paying tribute to Buddhist Siam, was forcibly incorporated into the state of Siam in the early 20th century. Once under Thai suzerainty the Malay Muslims suffered national and religious oppression and violent clashes occurred. In the period following the Second World War thousands migrated to the newly formed Federation of Malaya.

For decades Malay Muslims remaining in Southern Thailand have waged a sporadic insurgency against the Thai military and police. Making up about four percent of Thailand's population, but comprising the overwhelming majority in the four southern provinces, the Malay Muslims are largely denied education in their native tongue (Yawi, a Malay dialect), and suffer religious oppression at the hands of the state and Buddhist elite. The Thai working class must defend the Muslim minority against state repression without giving one iota of political support to the Islamists. Fighting for full democratic and national rights, it must demand that the Thai military and security forces get out of the southern provinces.

Revolutionaries would seek to unite *all* nationalities behind the proletarian fight to overthrow the Thai capitalist rulers. This requires a sharp struggle against the monarchy, which acts as both symbol and purveyor of Thai nationalism. While the arch-monarchist PAD Yellow Shirts seek to paint Thaksin as eroding the authority of the king, Thaksin of course well understands the monarchy's historical role and has no intention of undermining this important institution for capitalist class rule. The bourgeoisie has spent decades deifying the monarchy as a rallying point for capitalist reaction and national unity, codifying in the Thai constitution that "The King shall be enthroned in a position of revered worship and shall not be violated."

Patani Malay Human Rights Organisation

**October 2004 roundup in Tak Bai, part of murderous repression against Malay Muslim minority under then-prime minister Thaksin. Beaten, bound and stacked into trucks, 85 detainees died.**

Despite their best efforts, today the Thai rulers are increasingly fearful the country will fall apart when the aged and ailing King Bhumibol dies, particularly as his successor, the Crown Prince, is widely despised. In order to "protect the monarchy," the Abhisit government seized on the April-May demonstrations to establish a new "Bureau of Prevention and Eradication of Computer Crime." Two hundred people, including Giles Ji Ungpakorn, a leader of the Thai leftist group Turn Left/Workers Democracy which is linked to the Clilfite British Socialist Workers Party, have been blacklisted from posting to the Internet. In February 2009, Ungpakorn left Thailand to avoid facing a charge of *lèse majesté* over criticisms of the monarchy expressed in his book on the 2006 anti-Thaksin coup, *A Coup for the Rich*. The draconian *lèse majesté* law is defined by Article 112 of the Thai criminal code, which states that defamatory, insulting or threatening comments about the king, queen and regent are punishable by three to fifteen years in prison. Down with the blacklists! Drop the charges against Ungpakorn! Down with the *lèse majesté* law! Abolish the monarchy!

Opposition to the monarchy is intertwined with the struggle against religion, which deeply oppresses women and minorities. The overwhelming hold of Buddhism has a strong conservatising effect on the masses. Men are expected to join the monkhood for a period in order to "purify" their minds and become morally upright family leaders. For the rural poor, getting their sons into the monastery can be a means to ensure access to food, shelter and education. Barred from the monkhood, women are treated by the Buddhist elite as potentially greedy temptresses whose attractiveness is seen as a potential source of anarchy.

While women now represent close to 50 percent of the labour force they are locked into the informal economy, heavily exploited as home-workers, or toil long hours in low-paying factory jobs with virtually no rights. In the 1993 fire at the Kader toy factory just outside Bangkok, most of the 188 people killed were women workers, trapped because exits were locked as an "anti-theft measure." Domestic violence against women is also rife. Thai women face sharp restrictions on abortion, which serves to keep them chained to the patriarchal family. In the poverty-stricken north and northeast rural areas many women have no choice but to join the thriving sex industry where unsafe practices abound and HIV can be a death sentence. We fight for the separation of religion and state, for full legal equality for women and for free abortion on demand as part of the struggle for free quality healthcare for all. Thai women workers will be in the forefront of the revolutionary struggle to shatter the stifling control of monarchy and religion as part of the struggle to overthrow the exploitative capitalist system as a whole, the only road to the liberation of women.

The Thai proletariat needs a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to bring to the working class the understanding of its historic role as the leader of the dispossessed masses and gravedigger of the system of capitalist exploitation. Such a party must fight as a *tribune of the people*, combating all forms of discrimination and raising the banner of internationalist working-class struggle.

### The Fight for Permanent Revolution

Thailand is a classic example of combined and uneven development, where modern capitalist industry coexists with deep backwardness. The workings of international capitalism since World War II have transformed Thailand from a predominantly agricultural country to an industrial one with manufacturing such as vehicle assembly, electronics and food processing. In particular, industrial growth came on the back of the massive shift of production to Thailand by Japanese corporations first in the 1980s and then again under Thaksin following 2001. These developments have created a modern industrial proletariat with immense potential social power. This was demonstrated in 2004 when over 200,000 workers rallied on the streets of Bangkok, thwarting Thaksin's attempted anti-union privatisation of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand.

The recent mass plebeian Red Shirt protests reflect the deep inequalities of Thai society. Millions of Thai workers eke out an existence often at below subsistence wage levels, with Burmese, Laotian and Cambodian unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers having the worst conditions and pay. The sizable and deeply exploited internal migratory labour force, consisting largely of peasants seeking to escape impoverishment on the land, are a living link between urban workers and the countryside where over a third of Thailand's labour force continues to toil in back-breaking labour-intensive agriculture.

While the oppressed Thai masses chafe under repressive capitalist rule, various fake-left and petty-bourgeois nationalist groups internationally have avidly promoted the bourgeois Red Shirts whose demands are limited to the dissolution of parliament and new bourgeois elections. The maximum demand of a 14 April 2010 statement by the reformist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) was for solidarity with the "fight for social justice and democracy of the 'Red Shirts'" (*International Viewpoint* online). A 10 April joint statement by various outfits in Asia, including the Socialist Party of Malaysia, Partido Lakas ng Masa of the Philippines, Turn Left Thailand and the Australian Socialist Alliance (to name a few), declares that the crisis in Thailand "only can be resolved through genuine democracy and people's power."

In his "Red Siam Manifesto" (2009), Ungpakorn explicitly promotes similar illusions, fatuously declaring:

> "The red, white and blue Thai flag, copied from the West in order to indoctrinate us to be loyal to 'Nation, Religion and King', the same slogan which was recently last used by the PAD protesters who blocked the airports. Yet during the French revolution, the red white and blue meant, 'Liberty Equality and Fraternity'. This is the slogan we must use to free Thailand from the 'New Order' which the PAD and the army have installed."

Military rule and repression is the norm and necessary means by which the small bourgeois class in neocolonial countries, as agents of imperialist domination, keep the democratic and social aspirations of the masses in check. In stark contrast to Ungpakorn's faith in bourgeois democracy, history has shown that in backward countries like Thailand, where economic and social development has been stunted by the global domination of the imperialist powers, basic democratic rights can only be achieved when the proletariat takes power through workers revolution and begins to carry out the tasks of socialist construction. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution with V.I. Lenin, outlined in his "Basic Postulates" in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

> "The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfilment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a ***permanent*** revolution."

In further developing this point Trotsky stressed that the conquest of power did not complete the socialist revolution but only opened it by changing the direction of social development. Such social development can only be consolidated through the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced imperialist centres. Defence of those subjugated by imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in the imperialist centres pointing toward a proletarian struggle for power.

Our model is the October 1917 Revolution in Russia. Indeed it was the program of ***permanent revolution*** first developed by Trotsky for the Russian Revolution that points the way to national and social liberation in countries like Thailand. The October Revolution proved in life that only the proletariat, led by a revolutionary internationalist vanguard party like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks and winning the support of the peasant and urban plebeian masses, can liberate societies in countries of belated capitalist development. In the imperialist epoch of decaying capitalism that began more than a century ago, all wings of the bourgeoisie in such countries are too dependent on their multiple ties to the imperialists, too fearful of independent working-class action to play any progressive role. They are incapable of solving bourgeois-democratic tasks, such as agrarian revolution and national independence, associated with the European revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The revolutionary internationalist perspective of permanent revolution is counterposed to Ungpakorn's bourgeois-democratic musings and grovelling reliance on the capitalist state. In his article "Class Struggle between the Coloured

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**Thai king receives subject during Coronation Day ceremony, 5 May 2010.**

T-Shirts in Thailand" (*Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2009), Ungpakorn argues, "We need to cut down the military's influence in society, reform the judiciary and the police and to expand freedom and democracy from the grassroots movement." In contrast, Lenin explained that the capitalist state cannot be reformed or pressured to serve the interests of the working class and oppressed. Consisting at its core of armed bodies of men—the police, military and their auxiliaries—this state exists to defend the private property and rule of the bourgeoisie. There can be no overcoming the desperate plight of the working class and oppressed rural masses without overthrowing the capitalist social order and smashing its state, thus laying the basis, through a series of proletarian revolutions internationally, for a classless society of material abundance in which all forms of exploitation and oppression have been eliminated.

The proletariat is the only social force that can successfully lead such a struggle. It has vast potential power due to its central role in production—where its collective labour in industry is exploited by the bourgeoisie for profit. The peasants are incapable of cohering an independent social policy. They are part of a heterogeneous intermediate layer, the petty bourgeoisie. Their immediate felt interests are for the defence or acquisition of land. There are only two decisive classes in capitalist society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In countries like Thailand, the working class must win the support of the masses of poor and/or landless peasants, including through demands to expropriate the large landlords and for land to the tiller. A workers and peasants government in Thailand would give full, equal rights to women, immigrants and all oppressed minorities. It would seize the vast holdings of the imperialists and all the blood-sucking domestic capitalists, including Thaksin and Abhisit, and lay the basis for a centrally planned economy under workers rule.

Socialist revolution in Thailand would reverberate throughout the region and beyond. In the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Laos, Vietnam and China, the spark of proletarian internationalism could inspire workers political revolutions against the nationalist Stalinist misrulers, whose futile pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism undermines defence of these workers states. The road to the emancipation of Thai workers, and with them the peasantry and oppressed minorities, lies in the fight for a socialist federation of Southeast Asia, linked to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist heartlands. An insurgent Thai proletariat would find no shortage of allies in the imperialist centres such as Australia, Japan and the U.S. where today the various capitalist rulers seek to make working people pay for the deepening slump of the world economic crisis.

## Down With U.S./Australian Imperialism!

Following World War II and with the advent of Cold War I, which particularly targeted the Soviet degenerated workers state, the U.S. built up the Thai military as a bastion for counterrevolutionary terror within Southeast Asia. The anti-communism of the U.S. and Thai leaders reinforced each other in the face of peasant guerrilla insurgencies throughout the region including social revolutions in North Korea and China. With the defeat of the French colonial power in Indochina in 1954, and following the slaughter of some three million Koreans during the Korean War, the U.S. increasingly used Thailand as a military base and launching pad for imperialist aggression against the revolutionary struggles of the workers and peasants in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. About three quarters of the bomb tonnage dropped on North Vietnam and Laos in 1965-68 alone was flown out of Eastern Thailand. By 1969, there were more than 45,000 U.S. troops stationed there. Thai troops fought in Laos and some 11,000 fought in South Vietnam as lackeys of the U.S.

The bloody Thai military was also mobilised against the guerrilla forces of the People's Liberation Army of Thailand (PLAT), the military wing of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). Founded in 1942, the CPT had increasingly adopted a nationalist, peasant-based guerrilla strategy, not least under the impact of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, shifting its cadre from the cities, where they had some influence in the unions, to the countryside. This anti-Marxist strategy rejects the proletarian struggle for power. Ultimately the CPT/PLAT would fall victim not simply to military repression but also to its own class-collaborationist Stalinist-Maoist politics, compounded by the treachery of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies in Vietnam and China. Committed to the anti-Marxist dogma of building "socialism in one country" and seeking peaceful coexistence with imperialism, the Vietnamese and Chinese Stalinists were not interested in fighting for the overthrow of the Thai ruling class.

Thus, following the 1975 victory of the Vietnamese Revolution and the destruction of capitalist class rule in South Vietnam, the Hanoi bureaucracy pledged not to interfere in the "internal affairs" of Thailand. For its part, the Beijing Stalinist regime, having already cemented its treacherous anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism, had assured the Thai military by late 1974 that "China had stopped supporting insurgents in Thailand" ("Thai Coup Follows Savage Slaughter of Students," *Young Spartacus* No. 48, November 1976). By the end of the 1970s, the CPT/PLAT, isolated from the proletariat and kept isolated by Stalinist treachery abroad, had begun to collapse, surrendering its arms in 1982-83. Its remnants were arrested when they tried to hold a congress in 1987. The "people's war," as the CPT called it, was over, as was the CPT.

The collapse of the CPT is a powerful indictment of the nationalist, class-collaborationist Stalinist-Maoist doctrine on which it had always been based and which is hostile to a revolutionary proletarian and internationalist perspective. Following a military coup in late 1947, the CPT called for "a 'truly democratic' coalition government of the Communist Party and other democratic, patriotic, and peace-loving political forces," to be achieved through a common struggle under a "United Front of the Thai nation... consisting of 'the oppressed classes of workers, peasants, soldiers, students and merchants, including all democracy-oriented organizations, associations and political parties, as well as minorities and patriots'" (Kasian Tejapira, *Commodifying Marxism*, 2001). Seeking to ally with a mythical progressive wing of the Thai bourgeoisie, such calls push the false dogma of "two-stage revolution"—first "democracy" and later, socialism.

This schema was first peddled by the Mensheviks (the pro-capitalist wing of the Russian social democracy who opposed the 1917 Russian Revolution) and later by the Stalinist betrayers and all stripes of petty-bourgeois nationalists. A class-collaborationist trap for the proletariat, it has always meant tying the masses to the capitalist class enemy and has repeatedly resulted in the massacre of the communists and their supporters. This was exemplified in Indonesia, 1965-66.

In one of the most savage massacres in modern history, over a million Indonesian Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese were slaughtered. This bloodbath, a holy war against Communism, was the work of an alliance between the Indonesian army and Islamic fanatics directly aided by the American CIA and its Australian counterpart, ASIS. A catastrophe for the Indonesian working class, it was a direct product of the support by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to the capitalist government of then-president Sukarno. The pro-Beijing leadership of the PKI—the largest Communist party in the capitalist world—preached "joint unity" with the "progressive" Sukarno and his Indonesian Nationalist Party to form a "united national front, including the national bourgeoisie" to carry out "not socialist but democratic reforms." Politically disarmed by this program of "two-stage revolution," the proletariat was unable to defend itself when the Indonesian generals, led by Suharto and backed by imperialism, struck to behead the PKI (see "Lessons of Indonesia 1965," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999).

The key lesson of Indonesia 1965 is that the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have no common interests. For a proletarian party to proceed otherwise is a betrayal. Against suicidal reliance on the imperialist-dependent bourgeoisie of countries like Indonesia and Thailand, the ICL uniquely stands on Trotsky's program of permanent revolution. As for the class-collaborationist opponents of revolutionary Marxism such as Socialist Alliance in Australia, the USec and Giles Ji Ungpakorn, they reject this program and are thus obstacles to the liberation of the oppressed masses of neocolonial countries from Thailand to Indonesia, the Philippines and beyond.

Today, the U.S., with the aid of its Australian junior imperialist partner, continues to back the blood-drenched Thai generals. The U.S. has used the Utapao air base as one of its global "anti-terror" interrogation centres. Supporting Australia's economic interests in Thailand, its eighth-largest trading partner, the Australian government has maintained formal ties with the Royal Thai police since 2003. Alongside enforcing exploitation in Thailand and the region, imperialist cooperation with the Thai military is part of a broader strategy to foment capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state and a return to the untrammelled imperialist exploitation that existed prior to the 1949 Revolution. This they hope to achieve through a combination of economic penetration and military pressure.

Following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, U.S. imperialism and its allies have increased pressure against the remaining deformed workers states. In particular, they have been surrounding China with military bases from South Korea to Central Asia. The growing U.S./Australian imperialist military presence in the region is also a profound threat to the North Korean, Laotian and Vietnamese deformed workers states where millions lost their lives in heroic struggles against imperialist terror. U.S./Australian troops/cops get out of Southeast Asia! We stand for the unconditional military defence of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian and Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution and fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders whose bureaucratic mismanagement and appeasement of imperialism paves the way for capitalist restoration.

Genuine communists, intransigent in their struggle for the political independence of the proletariat from all wings of the capitalist class, seek to unite workers everywhere around their historic class interests in sweeping away this system of imperialist war, exploitation and repression. The Thai proletariat and their class brothers and sisters throughout the region must look to the example of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution if they are to throw off the oppression and poverty enforced by the capitalist rulers and their imperialist patrons. Foremost is the need to build internationalist revolutionary workers parties committed to the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. The International Communist League fights to build such Leninist-Trotskyist parties to lead the struggles for new October Revolutions from Australia to Indonesia and Thailand, to Japan and the U.S. ■

Mizzima

**September 2010: Burmese migrant workers strike against abusive treatment at fishing net factory in Khon Kaen, northeast Thailand.**

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# France, May 1968

## Prerevolutionary Situation Betrayed by Communist Party

Inspired by struggles around the world, the student protests for more social freedom that began in early 1968 in the Paris suburb of Nanterre spread rapidly. In Paris on May 10, pitched battles with the police left hundreds of protesters (and policemen) wounded. In response, on May 13, a general strike shut down all of France; it would grow to include some ten million workers. Seeking to end the strike, the government opened negotiations at Grenelle on May 25. The working class, lacking revolutionary leadership, was unable to put

LE BOLCHEVIK

itself forward as a contender for power and returned to work in June. We reprint below the first part of a forum by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France on the fortieth anniversary of the May '68 events. The forum, which originally appeared in the LTF's newspaper *Le Bolchévik* (Nos. 185 and 186, September and December 2008), has been translated and adapted for publication.

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The thirtieth anniversary of May '68, in 1998, occurred in the shadow of the "death of communism" campaign that followed the counterrevolutionary destruc-

Gérard Lecomple

**Workers occupying factory in Le Havre with banner reading "Change of Ownership." 1968 French general strike posed question of power.**

*PART ONE*

tion of the USSR in 1991-92. So the working class was disappeared from every commentary, article, book, documentary, news report, etc. May-June '68 was turned into just a big student struggle for sexual freedom and a few other social gains. We wrote in *Le Bolchévik* No. 147 (Autumn 1998):

> "The bourgeois press played up May '68 as a kind of bourgeois revolution that allowed more sexual freedom. This kind of propaganda has three purposes: exorcising the spectre of social revolution; proclaiming capitalism to be capable of continually 'renewing' and 'democratizing' itself; and casting an 'indulgent' look on the revolutionary 'unrest' which is now over and done with."

In 2008, on the fortieth anniversary of May '68, we are still feeling the effects of the "death of communism" campaign. The working class has reappeared in books, colloquiums and articles but it is presented as having become harmless, bound to the capitalist system and greatly weakened by the outsourcing made possible by the globalization of the economy.

We want to reaffirm that May-June '68 was a prerevolutionary situation, the driving force of which was the working class. The power of the working class paralyzed the country and caused the bourgeoisie to shake with fear. What the working class lacked was a revolutionary party capable of tearing the workers away from their treacherous leaders—mainly in the French Communist Party (PCF), which led the CGT trade-union federation—and of raising the consciousness of the working class to understand its historic role in overthrowing capitalism. The French bourgeoisie was able to get by fairly easily in the end because the PCF betrayed the working class. May '68 was the most recent prerevolutionary situation in this country. But there will be others. For those of us who devote ourselves to preparing to intervene into such a situation in order to turn it into a workers revolution, it is crucial to review these lessons.

### The Post-World War II Period

To understand how a social explosion of such importance could have taken place and what a revolutionary party would have done in this situation, we have to understand how different the world was post-World War II, and in the '60s, from what it is today. These differences are fundamentally due to the counterrevolution in the USSR in 1991-92 and to the campaign about the supposed "death of communism" (that is, that there can be no alternative to capitalism) that is being waged by the bourgeoisie with the help of reformist "socialists" all over the world, including those who, not so long ago (certainly in May '68) claimed to be revolutionaries.

Having usurped power in a political counterrevolution beginning in 1924, the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR repudiated the very program of proletarian internationalism that had led to the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, the program that Trotsky's Left Opposition continued to defend. The bureaucracy invented the anti-Marxist "theory" of building "socialism in one country" in the search for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, for which it betrayed workers and peasants fighting the imperialists all over the world.

But Stalin's victory did not constitute a social counterrevolution. The property forms created by the October Revolution were not destroyed but remained as gains for the workers of the world. The Trotskyists waged a relentless struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, seeking to oust it through proletarian political revolution. At the same time, they fought tirelessly for the unconditional military defense of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution, with the understanding that the outcome would ultimately be determined by the extension of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the imperialist centers through workers revolutions in those countries.

The post-World War II period was marked by the emergence of bureaucratically deformed workers states in most of the East European countries that were occupied by the Soviet Union and as a consequence of peasant guerrilla movements led by Stalinists in Yugoslavia, China, North Korea and North Vietnam. Struggles for independence erupted in large parts of the colonial world. In January 1959, Fidel Castro and his petty-bourgeois peasant guerrilla movement, the July 26 Movement, overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Faced with U.S. imperialism's increasing hostility, the Castro government allied with the Soviet Union and, beginning in August 1960, nationalized broad sectors of the Cuban economy, drove out the Cuban bourgeoisie and created a deformed workers state. This small country, 90 miles off the coast of Florida, succeeded in defying the American colossus and carried through a social transformation that inspired a whole generation of radicalized youth around the world.

The Fourth International, which had been founded in 1938 under Leon Trotsky's leadership, was deeply disoriented when capitalism was overthrown under the leadership of Stalinist forces. Michel Pablo, then leader of the Fourth International, reacted impressionistically to the onset of the 1947-48 Cold War and Stalinist expansion. He abandoned the struggle to build Trotskyist parties that aim to lead the proletariat in the international struggle for socialist revolution (see "Genesis of Pabloism," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 21, Fall 1972). Pablo abandoned the program of political revolution to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracies in the USSR and East Europe, claiming that a process of "self-reform" would ultimately eliminate the bureaucratic deformations in these countries. Maintaining that "the international relationship of forces" was becoming unfavorable to imperialism, he declared that "the objective process is in the final analysis the sole determining factor, overriding all obstacles of a subjective order." Pablo concluded that Stalinist and other reformist parties could adopt an approximately revolutionary perspective and that the task of the Trotskyists was to enter these parties and push them in a revolutionary direction. Pablo's perspective of "deep entrism" led to the destruction of the Fourth International in 1951-53.

In 1960 in Belgium, Ernest Mandel, Pablo's right-hand man, became the power behind the throne of prominent left-talking trade-union bureaucrat André Renard, who went on to sell out the 1960-61 general strike that shook Belgian capitalism just after the loss of its main colony in the Congo. Pablo himself became an adviser to the bourgeois-nationalist National Liberation Front government in Algeria after that country wrested its independence from France in 1962. In that role, Pablo participated in writing the laws on "self-management" that tied the Algerian workers movement to the bourgeois state apparatus so as to defuse the massive factory and farm occupations that had spread across newly independent Algeria.

The Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI) and its youth group the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR), the predecessors of Olivier Besancenot and Alain Krivine's New Anti-Capitalist Party, intervened into the events of May '68 with the same Pabloite politics that destroyed the Fourth International. Instead of orienting to the working class as the driving force of socialist revolution, they focused on the student movement, billed as the "new vanguard," and, to a lesser extent, tried to pressure the PCF/CGT bureaucracy. The destruction of the Fourth International meant that France had no revolutionary organization capable of intervening in the events of May '68.

Our comrades in the United States had been expelled just five years earlier from the American Socialist Workers Party.

Serge Hambourg

**Youth demonstrate in Paris, May 10. Repression of student unrest sparked general strike on May 13.**

**Algiers, December 1960: Mass demonstration under outlawed National Liberation Front flag in defiance of continued French rule.**

The Socialist Workers Party had been Trotskyist, the historic party led by James P. Cannon, who did fight Pabloite revisionism, although belatedly and mainly on the American national terrain. Our comrades were seeking to break out of isolation and in May '68 were engaged in discussions in particular with Voix Ouvrière in France.

The social explosion in France in May '68 was not a bolt of lightning out of the clear blue sky. The Algerian War had a huge impact and radicalized a layer of students and workers. In many cases, they were breaking from the Communist Party, which had turned its back on Algerian independence until very late, that is, until French president Charles de Gaulle and the French bourgeoisie understood that they had lost the war and were forced to recognize Algeria's independence.

Looking at the news headlines from April and May 1968, you can see that they also focused on the Vietnam War. Just after the victorious Tet Offensive by the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, negotiations began in Paris between American imperialism and the North Vietnamese. Let's not forget that after defeating the French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the Vietnamese Communist Party and Ho Chi Minh agreed, apparently under joint pressure from Moscow and Beijing, to hand half of Vietnam back to the imperialists, in accordance with the Stalinist theory of peaceful coexistence—which the imperialists needless to say never abided by. For the American imperialists, Vietnam was one of the main fronts in the struggle against Communism, where conflict escalated in 1965, for example with massive napalm bombing. That set off a lot of unrest around the world, including in France.

Many demonstrations in support of the Vietnamese people were organized by the PCF, the pseudo-Trotskyists and the Maoists. Note that at the time, the Pabloites of the PCI and the JCR were giving political support to the Vietnamese Communist Party. The leadership of the PCF, for its part, diverted the internationalist support of French workers into tailing de Gaulle's policies. When it called for "Peace in Vietnam," the PCF was really echoing de Gaulle, who, at the time, was maneuvering to preserve the influence of French imperialism in the former colonial world. In his September 1966 speech in Phnom Penh, de Gaulle denounced "the American war machine" and came out for an agreement with "the goal of establishing and guaranteeing the neutrality of the peoples of Indochina as well as their right to self-determination, as they actually are, each of them having full responsibility for its affairs." The Soviet bureaucracy at the time saw de Gaulle as an ally who favored peaceful coexistence, preferring him to the pro-NATO French social democrats. Meanwhile the Maoist bureaucracy in China considered de Gaulle an anti-imperialist!

**1968 Tet Offensive by North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front fighters struck a powerful blow against U.S. imperialism.**

In early 1968 there was also the "Prague Spring" in Czechoslovakia. There were cracks in the Stalinist bureaucracy in that country. The "reform" wing led by Alexander Dubcek promised "socialism with a human face" to the population, which was trying to get rid of the bureaucratic straitjacket. This situation could have opened the road to a political revolution. And it is precisely because there was the possibility to open the road to proletarian political revolution that would drive out the parasitic bureaucracy and establish a healthy workers state that the Soviets intervened to crush the protests in Prague in August 1968, provoking a new split in the pro-Moscow Stalinist parties and affecting the working class internationally.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, partly under the influence of the Vietnam War and the domestic unrest in the United States, in particular the struggle for black liberation, a series of prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations arose in Europe—in France in May 1968, in Italy in 1969, in Portugal in 1974-75. These situations were the best opportunities for proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries since the period immediately after World War II. They gave the lie to the anti-working-class theories, based on the writings of Herbert Marcuse in particular, that had been so popular before 1968. According to these theories, the working class had become "bourgeoisified" and could no longer play its historic role as the motor force for revolution.

In these countries the pro-Moscow Communist Parties and the social democrats would come to the rescue of the tottering bourgeois order. That's how the Western reformist parties, including the Stalinist parties, would play an enormous counterrevolutionary role contributing to the later destruction of the Soviet Union. The restabilization of bourgeois order in the Western imperialist countries in the mid 1970s was quickly followed by the imperialists' second Cold War offensive against the Soviet bloc.

While the ideological climate of the "death of communism" affects the consciousness of the proletariat today, in many countries fierce class struggles provide an objective basis for reinvigorating Marxism as the theory of scientific socialism and proletarian revolution. It is not communism but its parody, Stalinism, that has proven to be a dead end.

## "Big Strike" or Prerevolutionary Situation?

In France, following the big miners strike of 1963, the numerous workers struggles of 1967 were a harbinger of the explosion of May-June '68. The students were the spark. There was a real radicalization in this milieu over social questions as well as international questions such as the Vietnam War. Early in May the Gaullist regime, faced with growing unrest in the universities, especially in Paris, cracked down more and more on the students until the "night of the barricades" on May 10, when the police forces went wild, sending several hundred students to the hospital. In response, the major unions as well as the professors union and student organizations called for a one-day general strike on May 13, the tenth anniversary of the military coup d'état and de Gaulle's seizure of power. By the hundreds of thousands, blue- and white-collar workers and youth marched in the streets of Paris with slogans like "Happy Anniversary, General" and "Ten Years Is Enough." After this one-day general strike, the working class threw itself into battle.

Starting on May 14, the Sud-Aviation plant in Nantes Bouguenais went on strike, and the next day it was the Renault Cléon automobile plant, and then all of Renault. At that time Renault still played a key role in France, the saying being, "When Renault sneezes, France catches a cold." The movement spread to heavy industry, and then to all the factories in the country and to public transportation (trains, subways, etc.). Other sectors were rapidly impacted: banks, insurance, the post office, teachers (elementary, secondary, university), big department stores, etc.

Sectors that rarely strike, such as thousands of factories that did not have unions (because the bosses banned them or because they were too small), found themselves occupied for the first time by workers—men and women. By May 21, that is, one week after the May 13 general strike, several million workers were on strike, the figure generally cited being ten million.

That meant that the country was completely paralyzed by a general strike. People always talk about the prominent factories that had a huge political influence, but the strike was massive and total because all the factories were shut down. You have to understand that France in 1968 was much more industrial than today. On the order of 37 percent of the employed population was working-class, mostly with industrial jobs. The policy of industrial decentralization in the late 1950s and early 1960s created an important industrial network. Industry was no longer concentrated in the Paris region, the North and Lyon. Factories with several hundred or even a thousand men and women workers were set up in very small cities, even villages, in the provinces.

We say that this was a prerevolutionary situation. But what is a revolutionary situation? Lenin said, in "The Collapse of the Second International" (1915):

> "To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes,' a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time,' but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the 'upper classes' themselves* into independent historical action."

The first point is easily illustrated with a few examples:

- Edouard Balladur (who at the time was a young adviser to Prime Minister Pompidou) relates how, when the ministers phoned the *préfets* (regional government officials) to clear out the factories, the *préfets* answered that...they couldn't.

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OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education), 252 Bloor Street West
Room 2279
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
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# May 1968...

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- The CGT 76 union branch in Seine-Maritime put out a pamphlet on their area in May-June '68 that is full of interesting details. So, for instance, they corroborate Balladur's story by publishing the authorization that the assistant *préfet* of Dieppe gave the CGT, ***at the latter's request***, to control the distribution of gasoline.
- When de Gaulle's aide-de-camp General de Boissieu tried to get hold of General Massu in Germany, the telephone operator explained to him that she would have to ask permission from the strike committee to put this international call through.

Nantes is generally mentioned as the only example of a city run by a strike committee. But some recently published research about cities outside of Paris in May-June '68 brings to light how millions of workers managed their day-to-day affairs through strike committees. Many large urban areas (working-class ones, actually) had strike committees that managed food, childcare, gas distribution; also the CGT saw to providing electricity and water, garbage collection, etc.—all things that are taken care of by the government in normal times.

This shows how much the regime was teetering. "The upper classes" were apparently "unable" to live the old way. And the rapid growth of the strike, without any call by the union leadership, showed that the masses were also "unable" to put up with the old ways.

The reason the prerevolutionary situation in May-June '68 ultimately did not turn into a revolutionary situation is that independent working-class action did not develop further, mainly because of the lack of a revolutionary party capable of tearing the working class away from its misleaders, including the PCF. There were strike committees in all the occupied plants. The CGT 76 pamphlet I mentioned earlier, for instance, reprinted instructions from the CGT local leadership in Dieppe asking each occupied plant "to form a strike committee of the leading comrades, if they had not already done so." At best, these committees consisted of the local leaders of the various unions. They weren't (or were rarely) elected by the workers and only rarely asked the workers for their opinions. They had a lot of power, but they were controlled by the union bureaucrats.

## The Popular Front: The Greatest Crime

What was beginning to be posed by the strike was the question of power. The PCF was very conscious of this, right from the start. But for them, it was out of the question for the working class to drive out the bourgeoisie and take power. To divert the movement and protect itself, the PCF fought to form a government based on an alliance with the Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste (FGDS). The FGDS was a bloc between the social democrats of the SFIO (the French Socialist party) and several small capitalist parties. This is what we call a popular-front government and what the PCF at the time was calling a "people's government."

Georges Azenstarck

**Demonstration in Suresnes. Communist Party-led CGT union federation banner demands a "people's government," meaning an alliance of workers parties with the bourgeoisie to manage capitalism.**

A popular-front government is a government that includes bourgeois workers parties like the PCF and the SFIO, and bourgeois parties. Bourgeois workers parties are parties that have a pro-capitalist leadership and program but are linked to the working class historically and through their base. In 1968, the bourgeois Radical-Socialist Party and future French president François Mitterrand's Convention des Institutions Républicaines (CIR) were in the FGDS together with the SFIO. In other words, the FGDS itself was already a popular-frontist formation. Through a popular front, bourgeois workers parties can mask their contradictions and hide behind their bourgeois allies to betray the workers' expectations. An example was when the PCF called for breaking the 1936 general strike. (PCF leader Thorez famously said, "One must know how to end a strike.") It did this under the pretext of not wanting to frighten its allies in the Radical Party.

In France, popular fronts, which have included the PCF since 1935, have, in one form or another for more than a century, been a key tool for the bourgeoisie to try to co-opt struggle. As soon as struggle erupts, the reformists seek to channel discontent into a new "left" governmental alliance with bourgeois forces that will inevitably stab workers, the poor and minorities in the back. But the popular front isn't the only means of containing working-class struggle—to preserve its class rule, the "democratic" bourgeoisie will not hesitate to resort to more right-wing versions of parliamentary democracy or to bonapartism or even to fascism.

That's what had happened in France in the middle of the Algerian War, with de Gaulle's 1958 coup d'état, which established a bonapartist regime. In May '68, too, de Gaulle would contemplate using the army to break the general strike, as we will see later. Trotsky wrote:

> "By Bonapartism we mean a regime in which the economically dominant class, having the qualities necessary for democratic methods of government, finds itself compelled to tolerate—in order to preserve its possessions—the uncontrolled command of a military and police apparatus over it, of a crowned 'savior.' This kind of situation is created in periods when the class contradictions have become particularly acute; the aim of Bonapartism is to prevent explosions."
>
> —"Again on the Question of Bonapartism," March 1935

VAAP

**June 1917: With Russia in revolutionary turmoil, demonstration in Petrograd raises Bolshevik slogans "Down With the Ten Capitalist Ministers! All Power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies!"**

Preventing explosions is also the purpose of the popular front. Since the end of the Algerian War, well before the events of 1968 unfolded, the PCF and CGT leadership had been trying to build this kind of bourgeois coalition with the SFIO and the various anti-Gaullist bourgeois parties. Although it was hegemonic on the "left," the PCF went as far as not fielding a candidate in the 1965 presidential elections in order to give direct support to Mitterrand, who at that time was a member of the CIR, a bourgeois organization.

In the 1967 parliamentary elections, the PCF, the SFIO, the Radicals and the CIR ran separately and got better results than in 1965. Some Stalinists came to the conclusion that the left had missed winning a parliamentary majority by only a nose, after they took into account the other, bourgeois anti-Gaullist members of parliament! You have to understand that the PCF had just three fewer members of parliament than the SFIO. The PCF had 73 members of parliament, while all the other "left" parties together had 121. This shows how impossible it was to ignore the PCF in those days.

As soon as it felt the pressure mounting when the May-June '68 events began, the PCF pressed its potential partners to build a popular-front alliance. On May 10, before the "night of the barricades," the PCF leadership met with the FGDS to propose an alliance based on a common program for managing capitalism, their "people's government." This had no result; no agreement was concluded. On May 19, when the strike had already spread, the CGT and PCF put out a declaration explaining that "the power of the popular movement urgently calls for an agreement among left organizations on a common program of government with an advanced social content, guaranteeing the rights of unions and satisfying the workers' main demands." Further meetings took place between the PCF and its potential partners on May 20, 22, 28 and even May 30, always with the same goal. Building a "people's government" became a watchword of the PCF's propaganda right down to the factory-floor level, for everybody from CGT secretary-general Georges Séguy speaking before 25,000 Renault Billancourt workers on May 20 to ordinary activists in the plants.

This question of class collaboration and of the popular front would have been key for a revolutionary party to take on in May-June '68. In Russia in 1917, the Bolshevik Party categorically opposed the capitalist Provisional Government, which included Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (SRs) along with ten capitalist ministers. The Bolsheviks won the leadership of the working class by showing the workers, who were influenced by the Mensheviks and the SRs whom they had elected to lead the soviets (workers councils), that there was a contradiction between their leaders' pretensions to socialism and their alliance with the capitalists. In May 1968 the opposite happened. The Stalinists' constant search for an alliance with bourgeois parties (the FGDS above all) was the best proof that the PCF did not want to give a revolutionary purpose to the strike, that it did not want the strike committees to have the role of getting society going again in the interests of the working class, which would have led to a confrontation with the bourgeoisie.

In the end, the PCF sold out the May-June '68 strike for a few crumbs. Throughout everything, its goal was for this strike of millions of workers to end with de Gaulle's resignation and replacement by a bourgeois popular-front government. Given their influence in the working class, these leaders could not imagine that the PCF and CGT would not get corresponding government positions. In other words, they did not want a token ministerial portfolio in a pro-NATO social-democratic government, but a significant presence in one. In the end, it was the virulent pro-NATO anti-Communism of the SFIO and some of the bourgeois parties that prevented such an agreement.

When they form a popular front, by choosing bourgeois partners, the reformists clearly signal their intention to govern with the capitalists against the workers. At that point there is no contradiction to exploit between their actual pro-capitalist practice and a non-existent socialist platform. Trotskyists' opposition to such coalitions is implacable. It is our duty to warn the working class against the danger they represent.

[TO BE CONTINUED]


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# Puerto Rico...

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> 'Everyone will have a chance for a [better] future.' The episode ended with many students and guards shaking hands and hugging each other as they forged a peace based on their shared interests." [Brackets and emphasis in original.]

The guards demonstrated a much clearer understanding of their job description than the treacherous reformists of the OSI/ISO. To give just one example, *Telenoticias* reporter José Estévez asked one of them about their prior work experience:

> "Guard: We're from Loíza and...we do this almost every day.
> "Estévez: What do you do every day?
> "Guard: Beat people up.
> "Estévez: What for?
> "Guard: There for fun and here for money."

Supporters of the Unión de Juventudes Socialistas—Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores (UJS-MST) are also active in the strike. Behind a "socialist" veneer, these reformists promote illusions in capitalist democracy. After the 2008 elections, the UJS-MST ran an article bemoaning the defeat of the bourgeois-nationalist Puerto Rican Independence Party. They also supported the U.S. imperialist-backed Varela petition promoting "democratic" capitalist counterrevolution in Cuba. When it comes to the question of the cops and the state, the UJS-MST rejects as "obviously insufficient" the main contribution of Marx and Engels—that the capitalist state cannot be made to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed but must be smashed through a revolution and replaced by a workers state. Renouncing the key lesson of the Paris Commune, they claim "Marxism has not been able to produce a coherent theory about the destruction or transformation of the bourgeois state and the period of transition to communism" (*¿Qué Es Y Por Qué Lucha el Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores?*, undated pamphlet).

As UPR students' experience in the course of the strike demonstrated once again, cops and security guards cannot be "transformed" or persuaded to act in the interests of the very people they exist to repress. Workers revolution will establish a workers state, whose purpose will be the forcible repression of the capitalist class in the service of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what the revolutionary workers of Russia, led by the Bolsheviks, did during the October Revolution in 1917. The UJS-MST and OSI/ISO have demonstrated their hostility to the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution because their program is to reform rather than overthrow the capitalist system.

Rivera Pichardo/El Nuevo Dia

**December 8: Organización Socialista Internacional leader Giovanni Roberto (at left) appeals for unity with campus administration's strikebreaking thugs, declaring, "We are not enemies, we are brothers."**

The success of the UPR strike would be an important gain for working people and could inspire struggles internationally. Workers and student activists in the U.S. must see the struggle of the Puerto Rican student strikers as their own. The collaboration of the Puerto Rican colonial state and the U.S. imperialists' agents in seeking to crush the students' struggle underscores the need for joint struggle between workers in Puerto Rico and in the U.S. against their common enemy. We seek to intervene into such struggles to win young militants to the task of building revolutionary workers parties around the world. We fight for the perspective that the working class must seize political power in its own name, overthrowing both the brutal U.S. imperialist overlords and their lackeys, the Puerto Rican bourgeoisie, through international socialist revolution. This requires Leninist leadership to advance the unity of the working class and solidarity with all the oppressed across international lines.■

# Letters...

*(continued from page 2)*

might solve this crisis, or the twin, environmental crisis, that now face us. We can wait until we take power to think about such matters.

This is fallacious. Saving the capitalist system has nothing to do with formulating and putting forward solutions to our energy and environmental crises, anymore than it has to do with the unemployment crisis. Trotsky formulated the transitional program in order to show workers that Marxists had a vision for resolving these crises that would work: solutions, such as full employment through public works.

I do not believe that there is a technofix to the energy and environmental crises, as the authors of this article apply. We need to redesign our transportation and our urban layout to become much more efficient, in the near future, if we are to reduce global warming. This means, for one thing, a real mass transit system in the U.S., as an alternative to automobile use. We also need to decentralize much of the population in our big coastal cities to smaller centers more inland. This is not only the way Marx and Engels envisioned socialist regimes would solve the division of town and country, as they discuss in the Manifesto. It is a necessary response to the crisis of global warming, which is now an inevitability. Global warming means that the ice caps will melt, sea levels will rise, and ocean storm activity, like Hurricane Katrina, is going to increase; in fact, it already has.

U.S. capitalism will never accept such solutions, but as these crises intensify, Marxists must forcibly advocate them. Throwing up our hands instead and claiming that all problems will be solved as soon as we come into power, will just not be credible and is not the transitional approach.

Tom S.

* * *

16 October 2010

To the Editors of Workers Vanguard,

I was surprised when reading part two of your article, "Capitalism and Global Warming" in *WV* #966, to find the assertion that there currently exists a "problem of rapid population growth" and also that a socialist society will "provide the conditions for a natural decline in reproductive rates." While you polemicise against Malthus, it seems that you unwittingly accept, on some level, one of his theory's premises—that overpopulation is a phenomena independent of the social relationships of production.

Marx himself always considered overpopulation as *relative* to specific social relations. He observed that the surplus population created by capitalism has the previously unknown quality of growing in proportion to the amount of available surplus labor, i.e. in proportion to the growth of the productive forces. Furthermore he wrote that, "what may be overpopulation in one stage of social production may not be so in another, and their effects may be different" (*Grundrisse*, 1973, ed. Martin Nicolaus, p.604-8). It obviously follows that we cannot predict if communist society will, "find itself compelled to regulate the production of human beings" nor the quantity of individuals that will be desired. The answer is contingent on our productive capacities, which are never likely [to] be static. It is likely that in a society where every individual can live to their potential that our species will benefit from the highest numbers which our technology and natural resources can support at the time in question. It is impossible to tell if the "high" birth rates that are experienced now, will be considered too low or too high by our descendants.

I should also mention that your representation of a decline in reproductive rates as an "advance" is relative to the institution of the family, and the domestic slavery of women within it. In a communist society ***which has replaced the family*** the rate of reproduction will have absolutely nothing to do with "advances." It seems that from two angles, your analysis has faltered due to creeping shortsightedness.

J.A.H.

***WV* replies:**

We cannot possibly recapitulate the main points of our article on global warming, a complex issue involving many social, political and scientific questions. Rather, we will concentrate on a few of the matters raised in these letters.

C.M. dismisses global warming as simply bourgeois propaganda, offering no refutation of the vast amount of scientific evidence indicating that the earth as a whole is heating up, and that human activity is a contributing factor. In another context, we have had to refute the notion that science under capitalism is hopelessly tainted by corporate interests. For example, many point to the real crimes of Big Pharma and the medical establishment in order to reject vaccines and other science-based medicine (see "On Quacks and Their Defenders," *WV* No. 962, 30 July 2010) and "In Defense of Marxism and Science," *WV* No. 971, 7 January).

Tom S., on the other hand, raises the alarm that we must provide solutions to global warming "in the near future." In offering his own remedies, he twists the 1938 Transitional Program, written by Leon Trotsky as the founding document of the Fourth International, into a recipe book for fixing the problems bequeathed by the capitalist profit system. The Transitional Program presents a series of demands—a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to provide jobs for all, a sliding scale of wages to offset inflation, a massive program of public works, etc.—in order, as Trotsky wrote, to provide a bridge from "today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

It is worth restating that the goal of communist political activity is to build workers parties around the world to lead proletarian revolutions that will establish an internationally planned, socialist economy. This is the only road to liberating the productive capacities of mankind and eliminating scarcity, the precondition for the disappearance of classes and the withering away of the state in a communist society. We certainly did not promise that a successful proletarian revolution would easily or immediately resolve problems of such magnitude as the enormous social and economic disparity between the advanced capitalist countries and the impoverished Third World, or, for that matter, the most serious problems of environmental degradation. As we wrote in Part Two of our article:

> "For there to be any chance of rationally expanding the forces of production and utilizing the planet's resources, including meeting the challenges of climate change, decaying modern capitalism must go. The conscious, large-scale planning required is entirely incompatible with the profit motive and competition, the anarchy of the market and crises of overproduction, the division of the world into nation-states and interimperialist rivalries."

As to the spurious charge of Malthusianism raised by J.A.H., the essence of this reactionary theory is to blame the poor for their abject condition. To point to the contradiction of a rapidly growing population on a planet of finite resources, which are obvious facts, is no such thing. It is also obvious that rapid population growth *magnifies* the problems of poverty, starvation and much else that are endemic to capitalist society.

J.A.H. apparently thinks that it is desirable to populate the earth to the limit of its capacities. In the service of this rather bizarre notion, he falsely attributes to us the position that overpopulation is a phenomenon "independent of the social relationships of production." Working in an unattributed quote from Friedrich Engels, J.A.H. lectures us that we cannot tell "if communist society will, 'find itself compelled to regulate the production of human beings'." The complete picture presented by Engels is captured in this extract from an 1881 letter to Karl Kautsky, which we included in Part Two of our article:

> "The abstract possibility that mankind will increase numerically to such an extent that its propagation will have to be kept within bounds does, of course, exist. But should communist society ever find itself compelled to regulate the production of humans in the same way as it has already regulated the production of things, then it, and it alone, will be able to effect this without difficulty."

We noted the fact that economic and technological advancement in the developed capitalist countries of North America, Europe and Japan has effected a natural substantial reduction in the birthrate. J.A.H. is left to explain why what is good for the Swedes is not for the Somalis. Women of the advanced capitalist countries are not alone in wanting to stop being slaves to the fertility of our species. The position we put forward in the global warming article is not new. In "In Defense of Science and Technology—An Exchange on Eco-Radicals and HIV Denialists" (*WV* No. 843, 4 March 2005), we wrote:

> "Under communism, both the division between town and country and economic dependence on the family will virtually disappear. No longer will poor peasants or agricultural workers be compelled to have more children in order to ensure enough manpower to work the land. Human beings will have far greater mastery over both their natural and social environments.
>
> "Additionally, communist society will be based on a thoroughly different set of social values from those that exist today. The liberation of women from patriarchal domination will mean complete and unhindered access to birth control and contraception. Communism will elevate the standard of life for everyone to the highest possible level. By eliminating scarcity, poverty and want, communism will also eliminate the greatest driving force for the prevalence of religion and superstition—and the attendant backwardness, which defines the role of women as the producers of the next generation of working masses to be exploited. A prolonged, mild population shrinkage based on increasing material abundance and progressive social ideals will go a long way toward ensuring that there are enough resources to guarantee the well-being of all."■

# A Transit Worker's Inside Story

January 14, 2011

To *WV*,

I wanted to give you some anecdotes about the city's now notorious non-action during the holiday blizzard. Here are my impressions on what happened. Most of the information that was reported in the press seems to be true. Transit did not enact its highest-level plan to tackle the storm until the day the storm hit. As a result, necessary equipment that would be used to tackle the storm, like its diesel work trains and its specialized snow-thrower trains, were either idle or stuck in train yards under several inches of wind-whipped snow. Unacceptable levels of snow and ice accumulated on the tracks, with disastrous results. Trains stalled in open areas or on elevated tracks unable to move, some with passengers unable to leave. The HVAC systems on the passenger trains, unable to produce enough heat to counteract the freezing cold and fierce winds, left much to be desired. In one reported case, a woman had to be hospitalized for exposure.

Part of the problem was also the question of personnel. Because the storm hit overnight, most of the morning shift woke up to find that there was no way to get to work. Had Transit enacted the appropriate plans, funds would have been authorized to pay overtime for workers to come in earlier, or stay later. I work the morning shift, and remember the chaos at my work location the morning after the storm. Nobody's relief was showing up, so most workers who were there had been on the clock since some time the day before, mostly pulling doubles, but even a triple was reported. At the same time, the entire midnight cleaning crew was still there because they had no way of getting home. Some of them wanted to clock back in and help out, but the boss would refuse, saying that the overtime wasn't authorized. Some of my workmates decided to walk to work from wherever it was they lived. All morning, people would be trickling in hours late, huffing and shivering after their long march from some far corner of the borough.

None of the recovery effort was centralized or coordinated. Rescue trains were sent out on orders of local supervision. The "Rail Control Center," which is the centralized authority for the subway system, was not responding to radio transmissions from train crews for many hours. This is particularly distressing since oversight is imperative when you have rescue trains that regularly move opposite the normal direction of travel. Without coordination, there is less protection against a head-on collision or other disaster. From the top down, it seemed as though the Transit Authority was initially absolutely paralyzed by its inability to handle the situation. The only agency body that seemed alert and ready to handle the situation was the office of labor relations, which metes out discipline. In the aftermath of the storm the union issued a flier reminding workers that there are contractual protections against having your pay docked because you were late during a snow emergency. There are people being charged with being absent without leave even though they tried their best to get to work but weren't able to make it for whatever reason.

I remember discussing the blizzard with other workers. Some said they would rather go through the experience of the 2007 Blackout. Some speculated that the TA's problematic response was due to the new administration under Chairman Walder. This new administration couldn't deal with the crisis, they argued, because they weren't "operations people." That is to say, they don't have their jobs because of their ability to organize and execute a subway system on the scale of New York. Walder's function, quite publicly, is to wrest concessions from the union.

A Transit Worker

# New York City...

*(continued from page 1)*

bolts! Another sanitation worker, speaking to *WV*, summed up the problem in one word: "manpower." The Sanitation Department has at least 400 fewer workers than two years ago, and Bloomberg plans to further reduce the workforce through attrition. Already last fall, Uniformed Sanitationmen's Association president Harry Nespoli warned that the city was "rolling the dice" by cutting the workforce (*Daily News*, 14 October 2010).

As the storm hit, EMS union officials urged the fire department to declare a snow emergency but were told that City Hall had turned thumbs down. Ambulances were not equipped with traction snaps for tires, and many ambulance battalions ran out of gas. As for the MTA, efforts by transit workers to confront the crisis—and the sheer ineptitude of the bosses—are described in the accompanying letter.

Many of the New Yorkers cursing Bloomberg recalled how then-mayor John Lindsay bungled snow removal after a 1969 storm, helping to bury his presidential hopes. One thing U.S. mayors are supposed to do with some competence is snow removal. But in order to do it, you need the personnel. That's not how Bloomberg and his capitalist cronies see it. To cut costs, the mayor, whose personal wealth is greater than the state's budget deficit, is pushing a scheme to further reduce the workforce via privatization of city services.

Bloomberg's deputy mayor for operations, Stephen Goldsmith, made a name for himself as mayor of Indianapolis in the 1990s when he slashed the city workforce by some 40 percent through privatization and layoffs, while attacking health and safety regulations (and bungling a 1994 snow storm). In New York, Goldsmith is overseeing a "Workforce Reform Task Force," which issued a January 7 report proposing wholesale attacks on workers' rights and city unions. It called for rewriting union contracts and civil service laws to make it easier to fire and discipline workers, to gut seniority in order to lay off teachers and to extend probation for city workers.

AP

**Albany: May 10 rally by state workers protests plan to impose furloughs, withhold raises.**

The attacks against New York municipal workers are part of a broad assault by Republicans and Democrats alike on the wages, health benefits and (notoriously underfunded) pensions of public workers. With the continuing world economic crisis, governments in Europe as well as the U.S. are ramping up attacks on public workers, cutting wages and gutting pensions. The capitalist rulers are determined to further cut spending on social services, which they regard as "overhead" expenses that cut into the billions they make from exploiting labor.

In the U.S., the anti-union offensive takes its cue from Democratic president Barack Obama's brass-knuckle attacks on the teachers unions, which are used as scapegoats for the sorry state of public education. The Obama administration, which recently imposed a two-year wage freeze on two million federal workers, got its start by showering billions on the banks and auto giants while wresting massive concessions from the United Auto Workers, meekly agreed to by the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy. After decades of attacks by the capitalists, abetted by the union tops' concessions, the industrial unions, historically the powerful core of the labor movement, have largely been decimated. Now, for the first time, public employees account for the majority of union members in the U.S. But those numbers include cops and prison guards, who should have no place in the unions. Their job is to break strikes, terrorize blacks and other minorities and suppress opposition to capitalist rule.

In New York State, newly elected Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo promptly launched what the *New York Post* (24 November 2010) termed an "all-out war with the public-employee unions." His first act upon taking office was to sign off on the layoffs of 900 state workers, followed by the announcement of a one-year wage freeze. In response, Stephen Madarasz, a spokesman for the largest affected union, the AFSCME-affiliated Civil Service Employees Association, declared: "We don't have any problem doing our part."

Here is a clear expression of the role of the union officialdom as capitalism's labor statesmen. With the rulers gunning for the public sector unions, the response of the labor tops is to bargain over terms of surrender, or even to serve as willing


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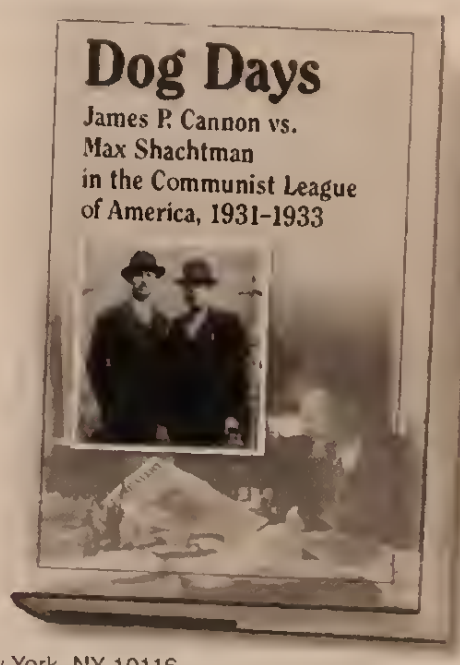


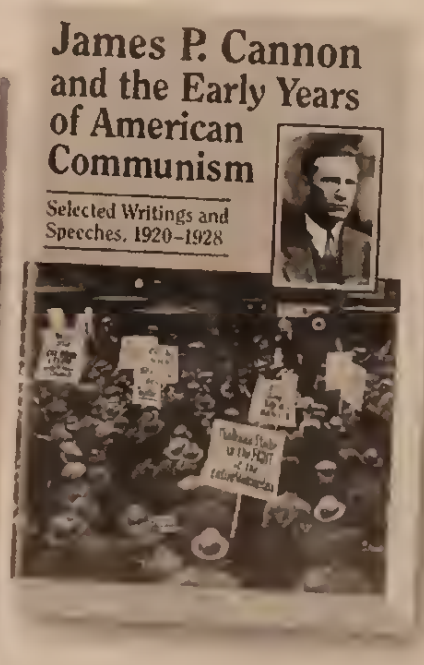

## Jailed for Defending His Son Against Racist Thugs

# John White Freed

Victor Alcorn

John White, a black Long Island resident imprisoned for defending his family against a racist mob, spent Christmas back at home after outgoing Democratic governor David Paterson commuted his sentence last month. Sentenced to up to four years for manslaughter and for possessing an unlicensed gun, the 57-year-old White walked out of prison after five months served. It is a travesty that he was ever jailed in the first place. And Paterson, New York's first black governor, who will be remembered most for slashing millions from health care and education, did not even grant a pardon. Outrageously, White, who rightly wanted a full exoneration, remains a convicted felon.

As we recounted in "John White Must Go Free!" (*WV* No. 905, 4 January 2008), in August 2006 White was awakened by his son Aaron, who had been chased home by five young whites, led by Daniel Cicciaro Jr., screaming the "n" word and threatening to kill him. The gang's lying pretext was that Aaron had threatened to rape a white woman. John White grabbed his pistol, ran out of the house and confronted the thugs on his driveway. As White turned back to his house, Cicciaro lunged for the gun, which discharged accidentally, killing him.

At his trial, White spoke of how his family's experience in the South with the racist terrorists of the Ku Klux Klan influenced his actions. As the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, wrote in a letter to John White's family hailing his release from prison: "The logic of your conviction was to deny black people the most fundamental right of self-defense."

In capitalist America, black self-defense against racist terror has historically been met with state repression, including through gun control measures. In the 1960s, gun control laws were passed in New York and California to specifically target Malcolm X and the Black Panthers. Like many other black Democrats, Al Sharpton, whose National Action Network was active in protest marches for John White, supports gun control in the name of fighting crime and violence. Recently, Sharpton has teamed up with the NYPD—the enforcers of racist state terror in the ghettos and barrios—to get guns off the streets of Harlem in a program called "Cash for Guns." As Marxists, we stand for the right of armed self-defense and in opposition to gun control, whose effect is to strengthen a monopoly of arms in the hands of the capitalist state, while racist terrorists like the KKK are always able to get guns.

The New York LBL was founded in July 1986 after a successful campaign to defend black transit worker James Grimes. A token booth clerk, Grimes was being railroaded by the courts for using his gun while on the job to defend himself against robbers who threatened to kill him. Likewise, the LBL and SL joined others in defending John White, and the Partisan Defense Committee sent protest letters and contributed funds toward his defense. As the LBL noted in its letter to the White family, "It is in the interest of the entire labor movement to fight against every instance of racist oppression." No to gun control!■

## Scott Sisters...

*(continued from page 1)*

statements written in advance. The jury deliberated for 36 minutes. All appeals to reverse the draconian sentence were denied.

Behind Mississippi governor Haley Barbour's decision to grant clemency to the sisters stood the Grim Reaper. Jamie Scott, who entered prison a healthy young woman, is now suffering complete kidney failure. After enduring the abuse of prison health care, she is in the final stage of this disease. As protests over the sisters' ordeal mounted in Mississippi and across the country, Governor Barbour made his decision. But he made it clear that a big reason for Jamie's release was that her medical treatment was a financial burden on the state. The macabre condition of Gladys' release is that she donate a kidney to her sister.

ACLU

**September 15 protest outside Mississippi state capitol in Jackson demands freedom for Scott sisters.**

It should come as no surprise that Barbour treats these black women as figures in an account ledger, balancing out an expense with a kidney. In a 2010 CNN interview, Barbour was asked if Virginia governor Bob McDonnell made a mistake by omitting any mention of slavery when he proclaimed April "Confederate History Month." Barbour replied that omitting a mention of slavery "doesn't matter for diddly." He added that, as Republican governor of Mississippi, he joined bipartisan Confederate commemorations with the Democratic legislature that had "done exactly the same thing in Mississippi for years." Indeed, Mississippi did not ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, until 1995. The last segregationist Jim Crow laws were removed from the state books in 2009, deleted without fanfare in fear of a politically embarrassing racist backlash.

It should also come as no surprise that the trial judge, Marcus Gordon, would treat the lives of these black women as simply trash to be disposed. The same Judge Gordon presided over the trial of notorious Klansman Edgar Ray Killen, the Klan organizer who ordered the 1964 murder of the three civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman. For 41 years Killen was a free man. Then in 2005, at age 80, he was convicted on three counts of *manslaughter* and sentenced to serve 60 years. A grand jury member who had reviewed the evidence stated with confidence that Killen "was the one every order went out from." In sentencing Killen, an unrepentant race terrorist, Gordon said that "he took no pleasure in the task" (AP, 23 June 2005). Gordon showed no such regrets in sentencing the Scott sisters based on coerced witnesses.

*Workers Vanguard* readers are well aware of the brutally racist nature of the U.S. criminal injustice system. U.S. capitalism is based on black oppression—and its destruction will require a Third American Revolution, a socialist revolution. As we wrote in "From Slavery to Mass Incarceration: Black Liberation and the Fight for a Socialist America" (*WV* No. 955, 26 March 2010):

> "From slavery to convict labor, from the chain gang to the assembly line, American capitalism has been built upon the lash-scarred backs of black labor. Any organization that claims a revolutionary perspective for the United States must confront the ***special oppression*** of black people—their forced segregation at the bottom of capitalist society and the poisonous racism that divides the working class and cripples its struggles."■

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tools for the bosses. Such is the case with Gary LaBarbera, a top union official of the NYC-area construction trade unions. With at least 20 percent unemployment among unionized construction workers in New York City, LaBarbera told the *New York Times* (9 December 2010) that "without a fiscally sound environment, we will not be able to attract new businesses to the city," brazenly adding, "At times there will be competing interests between public- and private-sector unions."

Next door in New Jersey, Steve Sweeney, an Ironworkers union organizer and the president of the state senate, is a staunch advocate of right-wing Republican governor Chris Christie's drive to slash state workers' pay and benefits. The treachery of these labor traitors prompted the *Wall Street Journal* (4 January) to gloat about "the first stirrings of a true American class war: between workers in government unions and their union counterparts in the private sector."

Even to begin to turn around the anti-union offensive, there must be a struggle against the labor misleaders who aid the bosses' divide-and-rule schemes. *All* labor—industry, transport, construction trades, services—must defend the public employees unions, and vice versa: An injury to one is an injury to all! The public sector unions must fight for their right to strike, currently barred under New York State's Taylor Law. Down with the Taylor Law!

With their large black and Latino membership, the public employees unions provide a living link between the labor movement and the ghettos and barrios. A fight by public workers to defend their hard-won gains could mobilize broad support among working people and the unemployed, all of whom have a vital interest in fighting against attacks on social services. Like the fight for free, quality health care and education, for free mass transit and other vital services, this requires hard struggle against the capitalist class, a tiny fraction of society whose obscene wealth is gained from exploiting labor. No less than the Republicans, the Democratic Party is a party of and for the capitalist class. While the Republicans openly appear as enemies of trade unionists, blacks, immigrants and the poor, the Democrats pretend to be their friends, only to end up doing the same thing. Break with the Democrats! Build a workers party that fights for a workers government!

Basing itself on the political independence of the working class from the Democratic Party and all other agencies of capitalist rule, a class-struggle labor leadership would fight for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread the available work. It would call for a massive program of public works to rebuild the schools, hospitals, roadways and other infrastructure. By fighting for such transitional demands, a revived labor movement would win the support of the unemployed, of the ghetto and barrio masses, in struggle against the common capitalist class enemy. As revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in the 1938 Transitional Program:

> "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."■


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WORKERS VANGUARD

# Cops Off Campus!

# Support the Puerto Rico Student Strike!

JANUARY 15—In the face of ongoing attacks by police as well as arrests and suspensions, students at the Río Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) have been on strike for over a month against the imposition of an $800 "special fee" that they say could force up to 15 percent of the students at this public university to drop out. This follows last spring's strike, which, with broad support from the Puerto Rican working people, beat back the government and university administration's attempts to privatize sectors of the university and eliminate tuition exemptions for students receiving Pell Grants. On June 21 of last year, UPR students voted to strike again if the administration went ahead with its fee hike. (See "Student Strike Shakes Puerto Rico," *WV* No. 963, 27 August 2010.)

**Young Spartacus**

The university administration and the Puerto Rican government, with the backing of their colonial overlords in Washington, spent months gearing up to smash the current student strike. The university administration hired private thugs from Capitol Security to occupy the campus and demolish the gates to the university, preventing students from barricading them as they had done last spring. The government sent in riot police, SWAT teams, snipers and police helicopters, turning Río Piedras practically into a war zone. On December 13, the Puerto Rico Supreme Court ruled that the students could not strike. Last week, an appeals court upheld the administration's ban on protests on campus, relegating students to Orwellian off-campus "free speech" zones. One striker told *Young Spartacus* that the UPR administration has forbidden groups of four or more people to congregate on campus.

December marked the first time police have been on the UPR campuses since 1981, when they brutally suppressed a student strike against the tripling of tuition. On December 20, the Shock Forces riot police viciously attacked protesters at Río Piedras, arresting 17 people and sending four to the hospital. Outrageously, eight victims of this vicious police assault face trumped-up charges, including felony weapons possession and "violence and intimidation against an officer." On January 12, ten strikers were arrested for passing out leaflets on campus, accused of "restricting the right of peaceful assembly and obstructing justice." Dozens have been arrested for alleged "crimes," such as defending the picket line and removing one of the administration's "free speech area" banners.

The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, joined the APPU professors union, the HEEND campus workers union and other trade unionists in condemning the police occupation of the UPR campuses, protesting in a January 2 letter to Governor Luis Fortuño that this was meant to "terrorize the students as well as campus workers, professors and trade unionists who solidarize with the strike." ***Drop all charges against the strikers! No suspensions! No reprisals!***

Indymedia

Giusti/El Nuevo Día

**Above: Strike support rally at gates of Río Piedras campus of University of Puerto Rico, December 23. Left: December 20 police attack on student strikers.**

## Free Quality Education for All!

New Progressive Party governor Fortuño, a self-proclaimed "Reaganite," is rightly hated for his attacks on the living standards of the population. In contrast, the capitalist Popular Democratic Party (PPD), which was soundly defeated in the last election, has taken the opportunity to posture as "friends" of students, workers and the left. But the last PPD government decertified the FMPR teachers union in retaliation for its nationwide strike in 2008 and rammed through price hikes in public services after the defeat of the 2005 UPR student strike against a tuition hike.

Key to the success of last spring's strike was active solidarity from the Puerto Rican working class. Professors and campus employees honored the strike. While limited by the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy's efforts to maintain class peace, support from public workers deterred the government from smashing the strike. In contrast, now many professors and campus workers are teaching and working on campus. It is urgent that the working class, whose social power derives from its unique ability to shut down the means of production and bring the capitalist system to a halt, come to the aid of the student strikers.

The attacks on public education are part of the Puerto Rican government's union-busting austerity campaign that has included the layoffs of more than 28,000 public employees. A successful UPR strike would not only deal a blow to the government's scheme to make working people and the oppressed pay for the island's $3.2 billion deficit but also defend working-class families' access to higher public education. ***For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—for student/teacher/worker control of the universities!***

### State Repression and the U.S. Colonial Occupation

In seeking to crush the student strike, the venal Puerto Rican bourgeoisie is working in tandem with the Obama administration, which is waging its own union-busting war in the U.S. In particular, supporters of leftist organizations have been targeted. On December 22, FBI agents went after Víctor Balaguer of the Federación Universitaria Pro Independencia, a student leader who had participated in a recent protest at the UPR Mayagüez campus. Organización Socialista Internacional (OSI) activist Ovidio López was arrested and temporarily detained at the U.S. government's Ramey base.

The close ties between the Puerto Rican colonial administration and the brutal U.S. imperialists are further illustrated by the case of Police Superintendent José Figueroa Sancha, who is overseeing the state of siege at UPR. Formerly the number two FBI agent on the island, Figueroa Sancha was "promoted" to become Puerto Rico's top cop after the FBI's 2005 political assassination of Puerto Rican independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos (see "Protest FBI Killing of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos!" *WV* No. 856, 14 October 2005). ***All U.S. troops and federal agents out now!***

The police, the courts and the prisons are all part of the capitalist state, a machinery of organized violence to defend the capitalist class's rule and profits against working people and all the oppressed. These agents of repression can only serve their masters—the Puerto Rican capitalist class and the U.S. imperialists. But there are widespread illusions to the contrary, including the nationalist illusion that student militants and cops have a common interest because they are "all Puerto Ricans." While standing for the right of independence for Puerto Rico, we give no political support to bourgeois-nationalist forces, which seek to position the Puerto Rican capitalists to be the unfettered exploiters of their "own" working people.

The self-proclaimed "socialists" of the OSI, who are affiliated to the International Socialist Organization in the U.S., are also promoting suicidal illusions in the state. On December 7, a mob of some 20 guards assaulted student William Francisco Ayala. The next day, OSI member and strike leader Giovanni Roberto misled fellow strikers into fraternizing with the guards. *Socialist Worker* online (10 December 2010) glowingly reported this shameful episode:

> "The students knew better than to see the young guards as their enemies. On the second day of the 48-hour stoppage, strike leader Giovanni Roberto got things started with a short speech in which he explained why the student strikers were fighting for demands that also served the interests of the newly hired guards.
>
> "'If we win this strike, we *all* win—because we will have made this university more accessible to us, to you and to your brothers and sisters,' said Roberto.

*continued on page 9*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 973

4 February 2011


# For Permanent Revolution Across North Africa!

Getty

AP

## Tunisia: Dictator Flees, Protests Continue

Tunis, January 20: Protesters confront riot police outside governing party headquarters, demand resignation of ministers linked to ousted strongman Ben Ali.

## Egypt: Mass Upheaval Challenges Dictatorship

January 29: Protesters atop a military vehicle in Cairo next to sign reading: "Down With Mubarak."

*The following article was written by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League.*

After 23 years in power, Tunisian dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali ignominiously fled the country on January 14. His exit to Saudi Arabia followed several weeks of protests, initially from layers of youth demanding jobs and to be treated with some dignity hy the state. Starting in the town of Sidi Bouzid in Central Tunisia, the protests rapidly spread to the whole of the country, encompassing broad layers of Tunisian society, including the working class, and were met with brutal police repression. Even official sources state that over 100 people have been killed in the course of the five weeks of social struggle, the great majority shot down by police fire.

In the hours following Ben Ali's flight, Mohamed Ghannouchi, Ben Ali's prime minister for over eleven years, declared himself president. Faced with further protests, which are increasingly being met with police repression, most of Ben Ali's loyal servants have been fired from their ministerial positions in the latest attempt to put a lid on the protests while keeping in place the core of the governing apparatus. For now, Ghannouchi is once again prime minister. The Tunisian teachers union held a two-day strike over January 24-25, and other strikes including in public transport have heen taking place to drive out the detested Ben Ali bosses, who in recent years have imposed ever more draconian working conditions. Pictures of workers chasing out the president of the country's largest insurance firm, Star, which is partly owned by a French group, have made the rounds of the Web.

Fed up with unemployment, rising food prices, the widespread corruption of Ben Ali and his family and cronies, as well as police-state repression, Tunisians have heroically braved Ben Ali's cops and thugs to fight for the most elementary democratic rights. Under Ben Ali, who since 1987 has been re-elected in grotesquely fraudulent elections, political opponents were generally co-opted or smashed. Now the bourgeoisie and its imperialist sponsors are regretting that their deposed despot left no ground for an opposition with "clean hands" to jump into the saddle, thus prolonging instability in Tunisia and beyond.

The masses' democratic aspirations continue to be a powerful spark for struggle. What is vital is for the proletariat, the one class with the social power and historic interest to overthrow the capitalist system, to emerge out of these struggles as the leader of the country's unemployed youth, urban poor, peasants, women and other oppressed sectors aspiring to emancipation.

The tumultuous events in Tunisia provide an extraordinary opening for popularizing the Marxist program of socialist revolution, which alone can address the masses' demands. The upheaval has

*continued on page 7*

FEBRUARY 1—As we go to press, the bonapartist capitalist regime of Hosni Mubarak—a strategically important client state of U.S. imperialism—is tottering in the face of an unprecedented wave of mass protests. In Cairo's Tahrir Square and throughout the country, protesters chant: "The people demand the fall of the regime." Mubarak's appointment last week of a new set of ministers, naming longtime cronies and former military commanders as vice president and prime minister, only further inflamed opposition to his dictatorship.

**Down With U.S. Aid to Egypt, Israel!**

Well over a million rallied in Tahrir Square today, while hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Alexandria, Suez and other cities in a nationwide stay-away strike. Tonight, Mubarak announced his "concession": he will not seek re-election this fall(!). In response, crowds in Tahrir Square angrily chanted, "We won't leave!"

One United Nations official estimates that as many as 300 have been killed and over 3,000 injured since protests broke out on January 25. Nevertheless, within days the massive demonstrations overwhelmed police lines in a number of cities. Countless police stations, as well as the Cairo headquarters of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), were reduced to burned-out ruhhle. The widely reviled police withdrew from the scene, although they have since been redeployed. The shaken government then mobilized the military—the core of Egypt's bonapartist state apparatus—to try to control the streets. The army has officially declared that it will not fire on protesters. But make no mistake: there remains the dire threat that whatever happens to Mubarak, Egypt's bourgeois rulers will demand fierce military repression to restore and maintain capitalist "order."

The upheaval has drawn in virtually every layer of the society—unemployed youth, university students, workers, shopkeepers, professionals. Overwhelmingly, their demands are for Mubarak to go and for democratic elections and other reforms. The situation has also created an opening for the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood, which initially abstained from the protests but called for its followers to join them on Friday, January 28. With the ports, banks and other businesses closed, the economy has ground to a halt, while prices for scarce food supplies are soaring. As for the filthy rich at the top, they're either hunkered down in their gated mansions or flying off to Dubai.

There is no question that the U.S. and other imperialist powers have been shaken hy the dramatic events in Egypt, the most populous Arab country with the largest working-class concentration in North Africa

*continued on page 10*

## For Revolutionary Workers Parties!

# The Arizona Shooting and Obama's "Socialist" Choirboys

Most Americans saw the recent shooting in Arizona for what it was—a senseless act of violence perpetrated by a deranged, delusional individual. This was not the case for the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and its Sunday socialist chorus, who used the event to counterattack the Republicans, who had just drubbed the Democrats in November's Congressional elections, for hate and violence mongering. For the most part, the comments from chastened surviving Democratic officeholders were muted or anodyne appeals to get along and work nicely together. This was in the spirit of the opening of the new House of Representatives, when the Democrats read, along with the exultant Republican victors, sections of the expurgated Constitution, the nasty parts about slavery having been deleted from that holy text.

Obama's speech at a memorial in Tucson, accurately described by many as a political rally, set the agenda, albeit with a tactful caution. He called for "talking with each other in a way that heals, not a way that wounds" and pled that "only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to our challenges as a nation." This pious sermonizing was ludicrously hailed by Garry Wills in the *New York Review of Books* (13 January) as the modern-day equivalent of Abraham Lincoln's greatest speeches excoriating slavery, overlooking in his raptures for Obama—CEO of racist U.S. imperialism—that Lincoln led a bloody and just civil war to crush the slaveowners' rebellion.

The *Nation* (13 January), organ of the Democratic Party left wing, intoned: "There is an opportunity now to show a different America. That doesn't mean only rejecting gunsight ads or turning away from threatening campaign rhetoric; it means leaders from President Obama on down clearly articulating a social compact, which is the only real route to safety for politicians and citizens alike." A half step to the left, the ersatz socialists of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP) groove on the call to "fight the right," particularly the Tea Party and other elements of the right wing of the Republican Party.

A reality check is warranted. The ongoing depression, the latest and by far the most massive of three economic crises in the past three decades, has further ravaged jobs and pensions while hacking to pieces the scant social services available in the U.S. that used to provide working and poor people with some basis for a livable future. Driven by the need to accumulate profits that is the *raison d'être* of their system, America's capitalist rulers, the perpetrators of this disaster, still walk the streets or, more accurately, drive them in limos.

Such recovery as has occurred is for the very rich only. Not only have these not sacrificed, but their gargantuan share of the nation's wealth remains unscathed. Indeed, the share of income going to the top 1 percent in this country has grown exponentially. From 1980 to 2005, more than four-fifths of the total increase went to this layer. And while working people continue to lose their jobs, pensions and homes in the "Great Recession," American businesses have in the same period raked in profits at an annual rate greater than at any time in the past 60 years.

The bourgeois parties, Democrat and Republican, who vie to administer the capitalist order are currently driven by the purpose of shielding the banking and industrial magnates from the consequences of the havoc wreaked by their rotting system. It is in the service of this purpose that Obama and the Democrats have acted to continue and escalate the attacks on democratic rights won in past struggles, rights that provide the oppressed and exploited masses with some defense against injustice as well as some ability to mobilize to redress the assaults on their ability to survive.

They hope that the population foregoes its guns (i.e., the right to self-defense) and accepts increasing constraints on what they say or print. Thus the government has recently gone after protesters of a war that almost all despise (see article, page 12) and those that expose the machinations and lies of U.S. imperialism, such as Julian Assange and Army Private Bradley Manning, who is accused of leaking classified documents and is currently in solitary confinement in Quantico, Virginia. These are deemed to be, at best, legally culpable for giving comfort to America's enemies or, at worst, traitors who deserve incarceration.

Although now somewhat embarrassed by its cheerleading for Obama when he ran for the post of Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, the reformist left remains committed to the Sisyphean task of pressuring the president to the left. The ISO and WWP will occasionally condemn the evils of capitalism, without any reference to the need for a working-class socialist overturn of its decaying social order.

Thus, the ISO's *Socialist Worker* (18 January) wrote: "Those who want to right the injustices of this society should protest the bigoted attacks of the right wing. But we can't accept the calls by Obama to 'transcend our differences.'... On the contrary, we welcome the conflict between left and right—in the form of struggle for a better society, and the louder the better." Similar drivel can also be found in the pages of *Workers World* (12 January): "While this resurgence of reaction is pushed mostly by Republicans, it also feeds on the weakness of the Democratic leaders, who have compromised and retreated on every issue, from health care to Social Security to workers' rights." In short, things will get better if the weak-kneed Democrats are forced to man up.

But of course the Democrats have done such, for their *class interest*. Among the impediments to "national unity" are pub-

TROTSKY

LENIN

### Tunisia, Egypt and Permanent Revolution

*Mass protests in Tunisia have sparked upheavals in Egypt and beyond against the brutal imperialist-backed capitalist regimes and for basic democratic rights, jobs and other necessities of life. As Leon Trotsky stressed in "What Is the Permanent Revolution? Basic Postulates," in countries of belated capitalist development, these aspirations can be realized only through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, necessarily linked to the fight for socialist revolution in the imperialist centers. This was the perspective of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, which led the proletariat to victory in the Russian October Revolution of 1917.*

With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses....

Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realized in no other way than through an irreconcilable struggle against the influence of the national-liberal bourgeoisie.

No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution....

The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfilment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a ***permanent*** revolution.

The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national and international scale. This struggle, under the conditions of an overwhelming predominance of capitalist relationships on the world arena, must inevitably lead to explosions, that is, internally to civil wars and externally to revolutionary wars. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such, regardless of whether it is a backward country that is involved, which only yesterday accomplished its democratic revolution, or an old capitalist country which already has behind it a long epoch of democracy and parliamentarism.

The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. One of the basic reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by it can no longer be reconciled with the framework of the national state. From this follow, on the one hand, imperialist wars, on the other, the utopia of a bourgeois United States of Europe. The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet.

—Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* (1930)


**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*

The closing date for news in this issue is February 1.

**No. 973** **4 February 2011**


## Spartacus Youth Club Events

**CHICAGO**

Thursday, Feb. 10, 6 p.m.

**The Russian Revolution of 1917: How the Working Class Took Power**

University of Illinois at Chicago
African-American Cultural Center
Addams Hall, 830 S. Halsted St.
Library Room 200

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

**NEW YORK CITY**

Thursday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m.

**Meet the Marxists at City College New York**

NAC Rotunda
(Take #1 train to 137th St.-City College)

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL Web Site:
**www.icl-fi.org**

**TORONTO**

Wednesday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m.

Marxism and the National Question:
**Defend the Palestinians! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!**

OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education), 252 Bloor Street West
Room 2279

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

**VANCOUVER**

Thursday, Feb. 24, 6:30 p.m.

**Defend China Against Imperialism and Counterrevolution! For Workers Political Revolution to Oust the Ruling Stalinist Bureaucracy!**

UBC SUB, Room 42V

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

# South Korea

# Socialist Workers League Members Sentenced for Political Activity

## Free All Class-War Prisoners!

JANUARY 25—Eight supporters of the Socialist Workers League of Korea (SWLK) face serious prison sentences for the "crime" of supporting workers struggles and advocating socialist revolution. Charged in early December under the notorious National Security Law, they are due to be sentenced on January 27.

The National Security Law, enacted in 1948, has long been used to repress leftist and labor struggles in South Korea. Its sweeping provisions include a ban on forming or sympathizing with "anti-state" groups as well as the death penalty for activities in support of North Korea. Since right-wing president Lee Myung-bak came to power in 2008, his government has repeatedly tried to railroad SWLK activists to prison. It has also ramped up its suppression of labor struggles, including smashing a strike by workers at Ssangyong Motor Company in 2009.

These repressive moves come in the context of stepped-up U.S./South Korean provocations against North Korea and China, including last month's joint military exercises in the Yellow Sea near the North Korean coast. Like a number of other South Korean left groups, the SWLK falsely characterizes North Korea and China as "state capitalist," a characterization repeated by their spokesman Oh Sei-chull in his address to the court in December. In reality, these are bureaucratically deformed *workers states*, products of the revolutionary upheavals in Asia that followed the Second World War. The International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of China and North Korea against imperialism and counterrevolution, including supporting their possession of nuclear weapons to deter imperialist attack. At the same time, we oppose the privileged Stalinist bureaucracies in Beijing and Pyongyang, whose futile quest for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism undermines defense of the revolutionary gains.

It is necessary to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party based on proletarian internationalism to lead a struggle for the revolutionary reunification of Korea: for socialist revolution against the brutally repressive capitalist regime in the South and for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in the North. Linked to the fight for workers political revolution in China, this struggle must ultimately extend to the victory of proletarian rule in the imperialist heartlands of Japan and the U.S.

The persecution of the SWLK militants purely for their political beliefs gives the lie to the "democratic" pretensions of South Korean capitalism. Leftist and labor militants internationally must come to the defense of these activists. We print below a January 22 protest letter to the South Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C., by the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the ICL.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee demands that the charges against members of the Socialist Workers League of Korea (SWLK) be dropped and that they immediately be released. For their defense of several strikes and their participation in demonstrations these members face five to seven years in prison for "anti-state" activities.

Oh Sei-chull, Yang Hyo-seok, Yang Joon-seok, Choi Young-ik, Park Joon-seon, Jeong Won-hyun, Oh Min-gyu and Nam-goon Won were convicted under the draconian National Security Law. This law was enacted in 1948 to suppress any support for North Korea and has been used to criminalize all political opposition to successive reactionary South Korean regimes. This is no less true of the Lee Myung-bak government which has imprisoned striking workers, launched a campaign against migrant workers and cracked down on demonstrations his administration deems to be illegal, the definition of which has expanded greatly under his administration. The prosecution of these activists is part of the continued crackdown on those who, in the face of the brutal South Korean government, stand up for basic democratic rights and is a continuation of the brutal repression against the working class and its allies.

We demand: Free the SWLK 8! Drop the charges!■

Reuters

**Riot cop assaults striking worker at Ssangyong Motors factory in Pyeongtaek, August 2009.**

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lic sector unions that, as yet, have not sacrificed their pensions and health care or succumbed to the tsunami of wage-slashing that has accompanied the depression, obviously in violation of the spirit of "shared sacrifice." With President Obama leading the attack on the unionization of teachers and such seniority rights as their existing unions have maintained, others, including not a few Democratic Party politicos, are thinking that maybe the right to collective bargaining for public sector workers has to go, let alone the right to strike to the extent it exists. In substance, this agenda differs little from that of the Republicans save for its emphasis on gun control and the Democrats' flimsy pretensions to protect the common man from the ravages of the system of capitalist exploitation.

Most Americans are justly angered and enraged by their circumstances. That this redounded to the electoral victory of the Republicans, who largely banked on the support of the petty-bourgeois bigots and racists who are the core elements of the Tea Party, is hardly surprising given the absence of significant social/class struggle. This absence is, to no small extent, a product of the groveling sellout of unionized workers by the trade-union tops who constitute a power base within the Democratic Party.

But it needs to be noted that it wasn't the Tea Party types who created the current catastrophe or who bailed out the bankers or who led the attacks on jobs, wages and pensions. Nor are they leading the attacks against democratic rights—in fact, they fancy themselves victims of these assaults. It is the objective of these yahoos—for the most part older and generally loudmouthed, self-satisfied white males—to protect "their" entitlements (Social Security and Medicare) while ensuring that no tax money is spent on programs for immigrants, black people, the poor and unemployed, women in need of abortions—i.e., on Medicaid, food stamps, scholarships and all other "handouts" for those they consider "undeserving."

The Tea Party is reactionary, to be sure, but not a fascist movement. Sarah Palin, who recently invoked the anti-Semitic charge of "blood libel," lacks the intellectual energy necessary to even try to read the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or *Mein Kampf*. Nevertheless, it is critically necessary to mobilize to stop the attacks on such social benefits as remain. (Even the thoughtful bourgeois politician might want to pause before putting to torch the last vestiges of the public mental health system.) Those attacks, which have been in process for decades, will not cease if Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck are barred from accessing the public media. In fact, attacks on free speech have always been and will be ultimately directed not at those who advocate injustice and oppression, but rather at those who protest and oppose these ongoing and integral components of capitalist class rule.

It is no accident that the ISO and WWP, whose rhetoric is emblematic of the entire reformist "left," add fuel to the absurd notion that the capitalist system based on exploitation and oppression can be forced to throttle right-wing reaction. Yesterday they led protests against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with the demand that the imperialists' guns be traded in for the butter of social programs at home. Today they hype the notion that there is a better society to be had if the rulers could be forced to lop off their right arms.

The current devastation is the product of the anarchy *inherent to the capitalist system*. Anger and rage are necessary ingredients of the class and other social struggles that are desperately needed to begin the fight to overturn that system. It is the multiracial working class that possesses the social power required to accomplish that end through socialist revolution. But in this country that power is held back by the chains binding the working class to the Democratic Party, chains that must be shattered through the building of a revolutionary proletarian party based on the understanding that the workers share no common cause with their imperialist masters.■


**Spartacist League** **Black History Month Forums**

## 150 Years Since the Civil War

# Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

**NEW YORK CITY**
Saturday
**February 19, 4 p.m.**
322 W. 48th Street
1st Floor
(between 8th & 9th Aves.—
Take A, C or E to 42nd St.)
For info: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

**LOS ANGELES**
Saturday
**February 26, 4 p.m.**
Mount Hollywood
Congregational Church
4607 Prospect Ave.
(near Vermont-Sunset Red Line Station)
For info: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

**BAY AREA**
Saturday
**March 5, 2 p.m.**
Methodist Church
303 Hudson St., Oakland
(5 blocks from Rockridge BART,
enter on Manila)
For info: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

# A Marxist Analysis of the Mexican Revolution of 1910

*The following is a slightly edited translotion of an article that first appeared* in Espartaco *No. 12 (Spring-Summer 1999), publication of our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México. In 1999 Mexico's ruling bourgeois party was the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, whose seven-decode reign would be broken the following year with the election of Vicente Fox of the right-wing Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Porty—PAN), since succeeded by the PAN's Felipe Colderón.*

**ESPARTACO**

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 was a long and bloody process that lasted almost a decade, during which more than two million people—almost 10 percent of the population—lost their lives. The gigantic peasant insurrection against the dictator Porfirio Díaz and its bloody suppression by the bourgeois reaction of

## *PART ONE*

Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregón are events that had a profound impact on the country and have delineated the features of the Mexican bourgeois regime to the present day. For decades, the Mexican bourgeoisie has benefited from using the symbolism of the Revolution of 1910 to legitimize its capitalist order of exploitation and oppression, promoting a pervasive nationalism that continues to be the main ideological basis for the political subordination of the working masses in the city and the countryside.

The 1988 split in the ranks of the governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party—PRI), which later led to the formation of the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution—PRD) of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, reinforced the old nationalist symbols that had been successfully used for more than 70 years by the decaying PRI to derail and repress class struggle. Subordinated to this nationalism, the reformist left, which feeds illusions in the bourgeois PRD, tries to convince the workers that only "Yankee imperialism" or the current PRI president are their enemies, and not the entire Mexican bourgeoisie as a class. Thus, the bourgeoisie, the PRD and their pseudo-leftist followers try to prevent the workers, youth and poor peasants from struggling against capitalist exploitation, and the working class from turning toward a common internationalist struggle together with the powerful working classes of other countries, especially in North America.

The nationalism encouraged by the bourgeoisie, which seeks to tie the exploited to their exploiters, intoxicates the masses with the lie that there is a "progressive and patriotic" sector of businessmen, politicians and the armed forces that can unite with the exploited and save the country from bankruptcy. The nationalist left, within and outside of the PRD, also helps to encourage ***class collaboration*** through the illusion that it is possible to solve burning democratic and social questions within the framework of capitalism. Nevertheless, this confidence in "progressive" sectors of the bourgeoisie and in the possibility of pressuring and reforming the capitalist state is a fatal illusion and a dead end for the working class and the oppressed in the struggle for their emancipation from capitalism.

Paris-Berlin, AKG

**General Eufemio Zapata (center, with sword), brother of Emiliano, with general staff in December 1914, when rebel forces entered Mexico City.**

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 had a tremendous impact in the semicolonial countries of the so-called Third World, which have become even more subordinated to the imperialists and their bloodsucking financial institutions. In growing competition with its rivals in Europe and Japan, North American imperialism continues through its NAFTA pillage to transform all Latin America into its backyard and its supplier of raw materials and semi-slave labor for its manufacturing plants. The generalized discontent over the effects of NAFTA has been shown in increasing social turbulence in Mexico, weakening the control of the PRI and helping to feed the growth of new bourgeois oppositions like the PAN and the PRD.

The hegemony of bourgeois nationalism in the organizations of the workers movement, in the corporatist unions as well as the "independent" ones, is the main reason why there has been no authentic proletarian challenge to the capitalist order. Thus, while most of the unions are still captives under the iron control of the PRI bureaucracy and its enforcers, the leadership of the "independent" and dissident union movement (from the UNT [National Union of Workers] and STUNAM [National University workers] to the SME [electrical workers] and the CNTE [teachers]) feeds illusions in the bourgeois politicians of the PRD or even in "democratic" sectors of the PRI. Nor is it uncommon for meetings of these unions and student marches to end with the singing of the national anthem, which is the anthem of the bourgeoisie. In this sense, the 1994 EZLN Zapatista rebellion, which arose in protest against the annihilation of indigenous villages by the imperialist rape of NAFTA, also reinforced the old nationalist ideology. The petty-hourgeois leadership of the EZLN, subordinate to the PRD, asks [then PRI president] Ernesto Zedillo to "lead by obeying" and demands that the national anthem be sung and the flag honored at all the unions and assemblies they visit. This is the same flag that is carried by the Mexican Army that murders indigenous people and that was saluted by [former PRI president] Díaz Ordaz after he ordered the massacre of hundreds of students in Tlatelolco [in Mexico City] in 1968!

In intransigent opposition to bourgeois nationalism and its pseudo-left apologists, which block the development of conscious, decisive class struggle by the working class, the Grupo Espartaquista de México seeks to bring the program of communism to the vanguard of the workers and youth who want to struggle

Brown Brothers

**Dictator Porfirio Díaz was overthrown in Mexican Revolution.**

against the exploitation and oppression of capital. The GEM is dedicated to forging an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the proletariat to power. We struggle together with our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada, seeking to mobilize the powerful, multiracial North American proletariat against the imperialists and the Mexican bourgeoisie and in defense of all immigrants and the oppressed. As part of the International Communist League, we struggle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

### The Permanent Revolution

With its nationalist, paternalistic ideology, the Mexican bourgeoisie justifies the social backwardness, rural poverty and illiteracy of millions of workers and peasants, blaming the victims themselves for the ravages of their exploitation. To redirect the dissatisfaction of the masses, the bourgeoisie also incites rotten xenophobic hatred, anti-Semitism, anti-indigenous racism, *machismo* and homophobia, relying on the willing help of the church. For their part, the bourgeoisie's arrogant North American imperialist masters portray Mexicans as a weak and lethargic people, using all types of disgusting racist stereotypes, unleashing the terror of groups like the Ku Klux Klan and border vigilantes as well as the racist death penalty. Against all this garbage, the communist program explains that the backwardness and grinding poverty in the semicolonial world are not the result of some "cultural" cause but instead come from powerful historical factors in the development of capitalism.

We communists base our struggle for workers revolution on the program of *permanent revolution* developed by Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky. In Trotsky's perspective, because of the combined and uneven development of the world economy, the bourgeoisies in backward countries are strongly linked to imperialist interests, thus preventing them from carrying out the fundamental tasks of bourgeois revolution—democracy, agrarian revolution and national emancipation. In the face of peasant rebellion and a combative working class, each and every one of these goals would directly threaten the political and economic control of the capitalist class. The democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution, then, can be resolved only by an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. Marxism maintains that there can only be one dominant class in each state. Because the proletariat is the only consistently revolutionary class, as the *Communist Manifesto* declares, this alliance must take the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasants.

Trotsky was unequivocal that the peasantry cannot play an independent political role. In carrying out the democratic tasks of the revolution, the proletarian state must inevitably make "despotic incursions into the rights of bourgeois property." Thus the revolution passes directly to socialist tasks, without stopping at any arbitrary "stages," or, as Lenin put it, without the existence of a "Chinese Wall" between the bourgeois and proletarian phases. The advent of a genuinely socialist society (that is, without classes) can only be achieved on an international scale, requiring the overthrow of capitalism in at least several advanced countries.

That is why we communists base ourselves on the central role of the proletariat and fight for the working class to arise as the leader of the oppressed masses in the cities and the countryside in order to overthrow the bourgeois order. But for the working class to be able to free itself from the exploitation of capital, it is necessary for it to sweep away the ideology of the bourgeoisie and draw its own lessons from the historical event that exploded in Mexico at the dawn of the 20th century. Without a materialist understanding of its own history, the working class, and with it all those oppressed under capitalism, would be condemned to suffer new bloody defeats at the hands of the bourgeoisie. The fundamental task of the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard, as we intervene to change history, is to take this understanding and the revolutionary program to the working class, fighting to

raise its consciousness to the level required by its historic tasks.

## The Absolutist Spanish State and the Colonization of America

There was a time when the bourgeoisie played a revolutionary role against the nld feudal order and the obscurantism of the Middle Ages. The classic bourgeois-democratic revolutions that broke out in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries had cnncrete results: the liberatinn of the peasantry, national independence and unification, the elimination of feudal constraints on markets and industry, etc. Marxism came to this generalization after analyzing the results of several bourgeois revolutions, such as the English Revolution of Cromwell in the mid 17th century, and especially the Great French Revolution of 1789, which is the archetype of the classic bourgeois revolution.

Marxism also pointed out that after this radical period the bourgeoisie stopped being revolutionary. The reactionary course of the bourgeoisie was clearly shown in the revolutions of 1848 in Europe and especially in France, where the bourgeoisie bared its counterrevolutionary teeth when it brutally smashed the proletariat. After that, one sees the European bourgeoisie repudiating its original political ideals, ceding power to the forces of reaction—all because of its fear of the working class.

Spain and Portugal are a special case, because they lagged behind the bourgeois development experienced in several other European countries during those centuries. Spain was the first great unified, absolutist monarchical state to arise in Europe after the Reconquest in 1492, marked by the taking of Granada and the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. The victory over the Arabs consolidated the power of the Spanish monarchy as well as the Catholic church, which played a central logistical role in the struggle against the Moors. The Spanish church was the pillar of the Inquisition, which was a reaction against modernization and the Protestant Reformation of Calvin and Luther. Torquemada's Inquisition also proceeded with brutal terror against the Jews. (This is one of the origins of the anti-Semitism that is deeply rooted in Latin America and in the nationalist and centrist left of today.)

The monarchy unified the church and the army under its banner, and, with the conquest of the Americas, the Inquisition and colonization went hand in hand. Thus, the Spanish state experienced a brief flowering from 1500 to 1550, above all because of the vast plunder wrenched from the American colonies. But this plunder failed to strengthen commercial capital, which was now ascendant in the rest of Europe. The Spanish mercantile class used it for the consumption of luxury goods, and the Spanish monarchy used it to purchase aristocratic titles and vast landed estates. A popular saying from that time captures something of this

Library of Congress Graphics

**Miguel Hidalgo (left) initiated 1810 insurrection that led to independence from Spain. Benito Juárez (right) led second Mexican revolution (1858-61).**

social reality: "Grandfather, a merchant; father, a nobleman; son, a beggar." The Spanish monarchy did everything in its power to keep the nascent Spanish bourgeoisie and feudal lords weak and in debt to the throne. Everything passed through the monarchy, which tried to interfere with and control all aspects of economic, political and cultural life.

For the Spanish Crown, the new colonies in the Americas did not represent commercial or settlement expansion but rather tribute-paying protectorates, new sources of royal income that were not much different from the various Spanish provinces. After the brief flowering it experienced through consolidating as a national state, Spain began a downward spiral toward stagnation and decadence. In a short time, the main function of the monarchical state became that of a simple mediator, extracting tribute from the colonies to purchase articles produced in other locations by the manufacturing capital of Britain, France, Holland, Belgium and Germany. The Spanish conquerors in the Americas soon became collecting agencies for the throne in Madrid, replacing the ancient Mexicas as collectors of tribute. But this extraction of tribute did not last long, owing to a catastrophic decline of the indigenous population in Mexico, which fell from some 16 million to about a million—in only two generations!

The annihilation of the indigenous population, the result of the brutal exploitation of the *encomienda* [peonage] system, famine and disease, was accompanied by a great influx of Spanish immigrants. With the impossibility of continuing to extract more tribute, other sources of exploitation appeared. Slowly, the development of a mnre diversified economy was achieved, one centered on mining, the textile industry and agriculture (dyes, sugar, and coffee, etc.) for the domestic market and for commercial export.

Thus, during the colonial period that lasted three centuries (1519 to 1821), we cannot speak of a capitalist Mexico in the Marxist sense of the term (contrary to the assertions of some pseudo-Marxist authors like André Gunder Frank and Nahuel Moreno, for whom the conquest and colonization of America was fully capitalist). What was implanted in the New World was a mixture of tributary, parasitic despotism with decadent feudal elements and an embryonic mercantile capitalism. All this was woven together and organized by the Spanish Crown in the world market of mercantilist capitalism. (This mixture of several elements is not exclusive to colonial Mexico.)

Colonial domination by a backward Spain stifled Mexico and Latin America at a decisive stage of capitalist development. That was why Mexico could not reproduce the pattern of booming commercial and industrial capitalist development that appeared in the most advanced areas of Europe, something that was also achieved by the English colonists in North America, for example. The fact that some elements of mercantile capitalism can be perceived in the Spanish colonies in that era does not mean that those societies were already organized on the basis of capital. For Karl Marx, capitalism was essentially a *mode of production*, not a network of overseas commerce (something that had already existed since the time of the Phoenicians).

## The War of Independence of 1810

By the end of the 17th century, Mexico was nevertheless the richest of the Spanish colonies, responsible for more than 60 percent of the precious metals sent to Spain from the Americas, especially silver. Over time, the Mexican political economy developed beyond mining, unlike in the rest of Latin America. For example, during the colonial period the income of the wealthy *criollo* [Creole: Mexican-born of Spanish descent] landowning *hacendados* was several times greater than that of their alter egos in Peru. By the middle of the 17th century, Mexico City rivaled Spanish cities in size and wealth. The name given to colonial Mexico, "New Spain," was not an accident.

As Mexico's economy developed, creole landnwners and artisans and the middle and lower hierarchies of the church and the army clashed against the Spanish viceregal power that mediated and blocked their access to international commerce and political power. Many *hacendados* complained about a law that prohibited indigenous Mexicans from putting themselves more than five pesos in debt. This regulation blocked the transformation of indigcunus Mexicans into dcbt peons—i.e., semi-slave laborers who would toil nn large agricultural estates where production was completely for export. This type nf Spanish protectionism was consciously maintained as a counterweight to the development of a creole bourgeoisie in Mexico. The Creoles began to demand the right to export agricultural goods as well as free importation of manufactured products and other prerogatives.

This contradiction was the material basis for the War of Independence that broke out in September 1810. This first Mexican revolution (1810-1821) was an attempt to resolve the conflicts between the nascent creole bourgeoisie and the stifling govemment of the parasitic Spanish monarchy. In his *Historia del Capitalismo en Mexico* (*History of Capitalism in Mexico*), historian Enrique Semo points out:

> "The despotic-tributary system did not cease to exist by itself. A revolution was needed to help it exit the historical stage, and this is a fact forgotten by those who argue that the revolution for independence contributed little or nothing to the development of the Mexican nation. The rule of the Crown and its viceregal bureaucracy constituted not only a system of external dependence but also an internal form of rule. The task of the turbulent years of 1810-1821 was to destroy it, and this was, to a large extent, achieved. The Spanish official who controlled down to the last detail a society divided into conflicting corporations, who intervened between the owners of the means of production and the laborers, who extracted riches from the colony to enjoy them in the metropolis, who opposed any local enterprise that went against his own or the Crown's interests had to go, and with him went all vestiges of the *encomienda*, the *repartimiento* [system of forced labor], the tribute, and so on. His place was taken by the *hacendado*, the main beneficiary of the revolution for independence, the natural representative of large private property and local particularism who—in conflict with the church—had to make his interests prevail over those of other social classes.
>
> "The revolution of 1810-1821 did not mark the victory of bourgeois trends over feudal modes, but rather the removal of all vestiges of tributary despotism with its bureaucratic centralism, and the victory of large semifeudal landed property with its parochially oriented *caciquismo* [*cacique* means local boss]."

As in all the Spanish colonies in the Americas, the push to declare independence in Mexico was accelerated by the fear on the part of the creole propertied classes and the church of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808. At the same time, news of the French Revolution arrived in Mexico very early. Its language may be found

*continued on page 6*

Culver

University of Michigan

**Left: Army of Hernán Cortés butchers Mexicas, as Spain conquers territory. Right: Spain reaped riches by brutally exploiting indigenous population.**

# Mexico...

*(continued from page 5)*

in the struggle for independence, although strangely refracted. The priest Miguel Hidalgo, who initiated the insurrection, roused the indigenous masses with his famous Cry of Dolores, with slogans such as: Long live Religion! Long live our most holy mother of Guadalupe! Down with the usurping government! Long live America! Hidalgo was an educated man and very familiar with the writings of the French Revolution. His letters include phrases like "the sacred fire that inflames us," "sons of the fatherland," and "days of glory," all from the *Marseillaise*.

But separation from Spain did not come until 1821, when Agustín de Iturbide, who was assigned to smash the rebellion, went over to the side of independence, among other reasons because of his appetite to anoint himself as emperor of Mexico. His slogan was "Independence, unity and religion!" By "unity" he meant unity with the Spanish monarchy—temporarily overthrown by the episodic revolution of 1820 in Spain, which tried to institute the radical democratic constitution of 1812 that called, among other things, for the separation of church and state. By "religion," he meant defense of the privileges of the Catholic church, the largest landowner and also the largest moneylender in Mexico. Thus, independence from Spain ultimately had a distinctive smell of counterrevolution.

## War with the United States, 1846-48

The next 40 years of Mexican history were full of revolt and internal struggle. There were constant clashes between the regional liberal elites, tending to appropriate indigenous lands (which were often controlled directly or indirectly by the church), and a weak conservative center based on the church, the army and the state administration. Between 1821 and 1861, there were 56 presidents in Mexico! It was during this time that Mexico suffered the first intervention by the United States, ordered by President James K. Polk in 1846—an event that presaged the current U.S. colonialist domination and rape of Mexico.

From a demographic point of view, at the beginning of the 19th century Mexico and the U.S. were almost the same—each had about six million inhabitants. (The population of Mexico was actually a bit larger.) But the characteristics of the economic systems in both countries were very different. The political economy of the United States was a transplant of the developed commercial capitalist system in Britain, whereas that of Mexico, as we have seen, issued out of Spain's backwardness and tributary despotism. U.S. capitalism was very dynamic, exactly the opposite of the Mexican economy. Thus, the northern border of Mexico was strongly attracted to the economic orbit of the U.S. More than 90 percent of the region's commerce was with that country.

Political pressures on Mexico had already been seen with the settlement of U.S. colonists in the province of Texas. The war of pillage that was waged against Mexico also had much to do with the conflict between the North and the South in the U.S. over the issue of slavery. The Southern plantation slaveowning class, which dominated the weak federal government, feared that the territories acquired from France in the 1803 Louisiana Purchase would tip the balance of power, and the South would be in a subordinate position. Thus they looked to the north of Mexico for new slave territories. Under the pretext of "independence" for Texas, the U.S. intervened to seize half of Mexico's territory from one of its many governments, that of Santa Anna. The U.S. Civil War's prominent Union general Ulysses S. Grant fought in the war against Mexico as a lieutenant. At the end of his life he wrote his memoirs, wherein he wrote of the Mexican war:

> "Generally the officers of the army were indifferent whether the annexation was consummated or not; but not so all of them. For myself, I was bitterly opposed to the measure, and to this day regard the war which resulted as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory."

Illinois State University

**U.S. troops invade Monterrey, 1846. Southern slavocracy sought expansion of slave system to new territory, including through conquest of Mexico.**

Adapted from map by U.S. Army Center of Military History

## The War of the Reform and the Porfiriato

The war with the U.S., and the constant interference of the European powers, sharpened the conflicts that had dragged on since Independence. In this context, the War of the Reform (1858-61) broke out, undertaken by President Benito Juárez in the name of radical bourgeois ideology and influenced by the principles of the French Revolution. This second Mexican revolution differed from its predecessor because it had more of the features of a movement of the dominant and semi-dominant classes fighting against one another, without the plebeian mobilization that took place during Independence. Juárez established the separation of church and state, forced the sale of the church's great landed estates and also abolished many of the collective properties of the indigenous peoples. Juarism established secular education and some social services. The Reform aimed for the bourgeoisie to be able to acquire property on a capitalist basis. From the Vatican, Pope Pius IX angrily railed against Juárez and declared "null and void" the laws of the Mexican government, excommunicating Juárez himself.

Under the pretext of the Mexican debt and with the cry of "Religion and Privileges!", France and Britain intervened militarily in Mexico in 1863, seeking to impose the monarchy of Maximilian of Habsburg. This new rapacious intervention was possible because of the proximity of the U.S. Civil War. France and Britain would not have intervened in Mexico if the U.S. had not been in the middle of a civil war. The North, which had already recognized the Juárez government, preferred to remain "neutral" for fear that France and Britain might recognize the Confederate slave power in the South. Juárez declared war against the invaders, and although at one point he was pushed into the north of Mexico, he finally won the war in 1867. Maximilian was captured and executed.

Juárez became a national hero. His conservative opponents, including the church, were discredited in the eyes of the masses because of their collaboration with the invaders. Nevertheless, in spite of the prestige Juárez gained, the climate of instability not only continued but was aggravated by the war's bloodletting and a boycott by reactionary forces. Thus, in 1876, General Porfirio Díaz, at the head of a liberal alliance, abruptly took power, installing a military dictatorship that would last more than 30 years. The coup was planned in close collaboration with U.S. interests. Díaz's peculiar motto was "Little politics and much administration." And to restore "order" in turbulent Mexico, Díaz threw out the Jacobin ideology of Juárez and achieved an understanding with the church, instituting the so-called "peace of the tomb": immediate military repression of any peasant or popular rebellion, jail and exile—including the massive exile of entire populations such as the indigenous Yaqui and Mayo of Sonora—to the death camps in Yucatán or Valle Nacional in Oaxaca.

The new Porfirian cabinet tried to shape a Mexican bourgeoisie that might enrich itself by riding on the coattails of the imperialists. To guarantee that the imperialist corporations and the weak Mexican bourgeoisie would benefit from the exploitation of natural resources, the Díaz regime promoted the construction of a vast system of railroads. Díaz tried to do a balancing act between the United States, Britain, France and Germany, setting them against each other in distributing investment concessions. The result was that toward the end of his rule, more than one-fourth of Mexican land was the property of foreigners, as well as 90 percent of industrial capital.

It was the age of the ascendancy of modern imperialism, and the imperialist powers were deeply involved in the Mexican economy. U.S. capitalists were particularly concentrated in mining, railroads and the great cattle *haciendas* in the north. Yucatán was basically a satellite plantation of the International Harvester Company. The British were involved in the petroleum industry in particular, while the Germans tried to dominate the banking system. For their part, the French had large investments in textiles and amassed large amounts of Mexican government debt in the form of bonds. But with the world financial crisis at the beginning of the 20th century, marked by a precipitous fall in the prices of raw materials, the Mexican economy, sustained by the export of those materials, suffered a tremendous blow, and the Díaz dictatorship became extremely isolated and discredited.

## Madero "Unleashes the Tiger"

In 1910 Mexico was an overwhelmingly agrarian country, characterized by a marked particularism and regional parochialism, where the majority of peasants had no land. This development was a direct consequence of imperialist investments and the rapid expansion of the railroads during the Porfiriato, which, by opening up the interior of the country, unleashed an explosion of land speculation and growth of agricultural production for export.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 began as a classic Mexican uprising by five northern governors. Representing the bourgeoisie in that region, which was most closely linked to the U.S. economy, they felt threatened by the decrepit central government of Díaz. With his extensive network of favoritism and cronyism, the dictator had become an obstacle for the bourgeoisie and the object of popular hatred. At the end of Díaz's long reign, the country was shaken by a profound financial crisis, worsened by corruption, gigantic government debt and a fiscal policy that was intolerable for the population. In the years immediately preceding the revolution, a wave of combative strikes (Cananea, Río Blanco, etc.) and peasant restlessness swept the country.

Francisco I. Madero, the most representative figure in this stage of the revolution against Díaz, came from one of the richest families in the country, one which wanted to compete with companies from the United States. But Madero's timid campaign to bar the president from running for re-election soon opened the door to a series of peasant revolts that swept like wildfire through the country, as unrest could no longer be contained by the dictator. Díaz soon capitulated to Madero and the northern revolutionary wave, which was powerfully reinforced by massive popular protests in Mexico City. In the elections that followed the fall of Díaz, Madero emerged victorious and anointed himself president. Like a good bourgeois politician, Madero left the military apparatus of the old regime intact, and the essence of his program was a colorless liberalism. Certainly, Madero had no intention of altering social relations in the countryside, nor did he grant any concessions whatever to the working class.

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# Tunisia...

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been marked by an outpouring of all social classes other than the upper echelons of the Tunisian bourgeoisie, a good many of them cronies of Ben Ali. Tunisian flags have been everywhere. This reflects a nationalist consciousness that is also expressed in widespread illusions in the army, whose chief reportedly refused to fire on civilian demonstrators and is rumored to have orchestrated the ouster of Ben Ali. Such illusions are a deadly danger to the working people and the oppressed.

Amid the political vacuum created by Ben Ali's departure and the jostling for political influence by various forces in the country, what is needed is a Marxist working-class vanguard putting forward the program of permanent revolution: the seizure of power by the working class, fighting to extend its revolutionary victory to the centers of world imperialism—the only way to break the fetters of political despotism and economic and social backwardness.

## For a Workers and Peasants Government!

In Tunisia, as in other countries of belated capitalist development, historic gains—such as political democracy and national emancipation—associated with the great bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th century in Britain and France cannot be realized so long as bourgeois rule remains. Tunisia is a neocolonial country whose bourgeoisie is tied by a million strings to world imperialism, particularly France, the former colonial ruler, which benefits from the deep oppression of Tunisia's masses and served as the main prop for the Ben Ali regime.

French foreign minister Michele Alliot-Marie even offered to send security forces to help crush the uprising. (A cargo plane full of tear gas canisters was stopped from heading to Tunisia only after news came out that Ben Ali had left the country.) Over a thousand French companies are active in Tunisia, owning the bulk of the financial sector and employing over 100,000 people. U.S. imperialism was also key in propping up the Ben Ali regime. One of the documents recently released by WikiLeaks quotes a July 2009 cable by the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia: "The United States needs help in this region to promote our values and policies. Tunisia is one place where, in time, we might find it."

The subordination of Tunisia to imperialism serves to ensure the brutal exploitation and oppression of its people. Authentic national and social liberation requires mobilizing the proletariat in a frontal attack against the imperialists *and* the domestic bourgeoisie, which is the deadly enemy of Tunisia's workers and oppressed. Indeed, amid continuing protests, there is a real danger of the military carrying out a coup to stabilize the bourgeois order. Addressing protesters on January 24, General Rachid Ammar, the army chief of staff, ominously stressed that "the national army is the guarantor of the revolution" (*Le Monde*, 26 January). For its part, the right-wing *Le Figaro* (18 January), a French government mouthpiece, openly and threateningly mooted a military coup as the next stage to save bourgeois order and imperialist domination in Tunisia: "Except for accepting this government of national unity [with Ben Ali cronies] to organize upcoming democratic elections, the Tunisians have no plan B to re-establish civilian peace, except resorting to the military to occupy power."

In Tunisia today, even a small Marxist propaganda group putting forward a series of transitional demands that link the democratic aspirations of the masses to the struggle for proletarian power could have a great impact on unfolding events. This would lay the basis for the building of a revolutionary party that can lead the proletariat in the fight for a workers and peasants government that expropriates the bourgeoisie. Such a party must be forged not only against Ben Ali's cronies but also against all manner of bourgeois "reformers" as well as the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists.

A proletarian victory in Tunisia would have an electrifying impact throughout North Africa and the Near East and would serve as a bridge to socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, especially France, where some 700,000 Tunisians reside. Summarizing his theory of permanent revolution, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky underlined in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

> "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving ***democracy and national emancipation*** is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses....
>
> "The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a ***permanent*** revolution....
>
> "In a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution."

Getty

**January 14: Protester outside Interior Ministry in Tunis calls for ouster of Ben Ali.**

## The Bankruptcy of Tunisian Nationalism

Tunisia has long been touted by its rulers, including by the late Habib Bourguiba, the country's first president after it received independence from France in 1956, as well as by the imperialists and international bourgeois press as an exception in North Africa for its development, high level of education and supposed equal opportunities for women. However, the case of Mohamed Bouazizi, whose self-immolation sparked the revolt that led to the toppling of Ben Ali, encapsulates the grim reality of life in Tunisia today.

After becoming the main provider for his family at the age of ten, selling fresh produce at the local market, he gave up on his plans to study and left high school at 19 without graduating in order to support his family and give his younger siblings the chance to stay in school. Those who knew Bouazizi spoke of years of abuse and harassment by local police who would confiscate his wares and fine him, ostensibly for not having a permit to sell. On December 17, the police took his scales, tossed aside his cart and beat him. Less than an hour later, after local officials refused to hear his complaint, he set himself alight. Outraged by the events, the city of Sidi Bouzid erupted in protests. Mohamed Bouazizi died on January 4.

Reuters

**January 17: Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi, crony of departed Ben Ali, at his office amid continual government shake-ups.**

Untold numbers of Tunisians and other North Africans, mainly youth, have died in venturing the dangerous boat trip to reach Italy and the rest of Europe to look for work—only to then be subjected to backbreaking exploitation and racist oppression, living under constant danger of deportation. And even that route has become increasingly closed as the European imperialists clamp down on immigration. According to Sami Aouadi, a leader of the Tunisian UGTT trade-union federation, there are today at least 200,000 people with a college degree who are unemployed in Tunisia—that is, 27 percent of all the unemployed in a country numbering about ten million people.

The Tunisian economy is based on agriculture and related processing industries, some oil extraction, phosphate mining in the Gafsa area, tourism and some industry. Textiles, with its heavily female workforce, makes up nearly half of the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing, including French-owned spare parts factories for the auto and aeronautical industries, constitutes about one-fifth of Tunisia's GDP. There is also an increasingly important service industry with a number of foreign companies, particularly French telecommunications operators, having outsourced call centers to Tunisia. Tunisian workers earn one-eighth of West European wages.

While Tunisia is hardly a heavily industrialized country, it does have a significant trade-union movement, with the UGTT claiming to represent some 600,000 blue-collar workers. The UGTT has a unique history in North Africa of not being completely subservient to the bourgeois-nationalist ruling government. It has engaged in both class struggle and deep class collaboration with the nationalists in power. Ben Ali seemed to have finally brought the UGTT to heel after many years of repression, and in recent years the top leaders of the union federation were also members of the leadership of Ben Ali's Democratic-Constitutional Rally (RCD) party. The UGTT tops called for a vote to Ben Ali in 1999, 2004 and again in 2009, at a time when the population was sarcastically changing the "Ben Ali 2009" campaign posters to "Ben Ali 2080" and "Ben Ali 2500."

On December 28, the UGTT demanded the release of those imprisoned following the protests in Sidi Bouzid and elsewhere. However, it insisted that its demands were made "with the aim of contributing to devising constructive solutions in order to appease the situation in that area and contain its fallout." Under pressure from its ranks, and as protests swelled, it made statements increasingly hostile to the government and finally allowed its regional chapters to call for local general strikes on January 14, the very day that Ben Ali fled.

The UGTT leadership then jumped into the "new" government, the key posts of which, including the police, remained manned by Ben Ali associates. Again, it was only under the pressure of mass protests against the sham "transitional government" that the UGTT ministers resigned from their posts, saying they were still willing to participate in the capitalist government provided that prime minister Ghannouchi was the only Ben Ali crony in it. As Jilani Hammami, a UGTT leader, delicately put it, the trade-union federation "was subjected to heated debates, counterposing the leadership, with its links to the regime, to the federal and regional chapters, which supported the popular uprising." More recently, the UGTT has endorsed the reshuffled "interim government" in a (so far futile) attempt to quell protests.

## The 2008 Gafsa Revolt: a Precursor

The contradictory role played by the trade unions, as well as the divisions between the base and the tops of these unions, was also seen in the 2008 revolt in Gafsa. This revolt was a precursor to the current social upheaval and had previously been the most significant protest Tunisia had seen since the Bread Revolt in 1984, which erupted after Bourguiba instituted an IMF-dictated 100 percent hike in the price of bread.

A phosphate mining area, the Gafsa region has been hit particularly hard by mass unemployment. Over the past three decades, the government-controlled CPG (Company of Gafsa Phosphates), the region's main employer, has reduced its payroll from 14,000 workers to little more than 5,000. A popular upheaval broke out in January 2008 when the mining company produced a list of people to be hired that favored individuals loyal to the government and to the UGTT regional lead-

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International Communist League pamphlet comprising three articles from ICL press: "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution," "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern" and "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!" These articles together constitute an introduction to the historically founded principles and program of Trotskyism (i.e., genuine Marxism).

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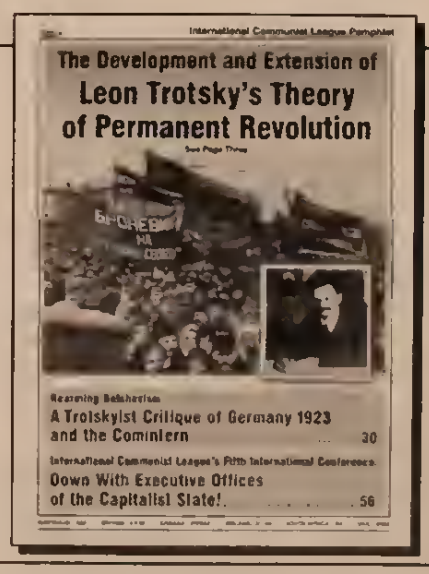

Philippot/Sygma

Economist

**Tunisia's French overlords, then and now: (left) Socialist president François Mitterrand with Habib Bourguiba, 1983; (right) current president Nicolas Sarkozy with Ben Ali, before latter fled to Saudi Arabia.**

# Tunisia...

*(continued from page 7)*

ers. Since the company had a policy of not replacing its retirees, this was its first hiring opportunity in six years; hopes were thus particularly high.

For months, workers, women and unemployed youth in the mining region protested. Their banners declared, "Work, Freedom and National Dignity," "We Want Jobs, No to Promises and Illusions" and "No to Corruption and Opportunism." In June 2008, the government cracked down. Two people were killed, in addition to one the month before, while dozens were injured and many more were imprisoned. In November 2009, most prisoners were released under a presidential pardon by an increasingly unstable Ben Ali regime, but with the sentences remaining in place and the individuals subject to regular police controls. However, Fahem Boukadous, a journalist who covered the Gafsa revolt, was sentenced last year to four years in prison and released only on January 19. The workers movement in Tunisia and internationally must demand: ***Freedom now for all the heroic fighters of the Gafsa upheaval and all other victims of bonapartist repression!***

Local UGTT activists played a key role in the Gafsa struggle, particularly in the town of Redeyef. However, the central and regional leadership denounced the protests and even suspended one of the trade unionists leading the protests—Adnane Hajji, a teacher who was subsequently sentenced to more than ten years in jail. While on paper the UGTT is opposed to temporary jobs, local UGTT honcho Amara Abbassi, a member of the RCD central committee and of parliament, set up a company of labor brokers to supply the mines with temporary workers. He also set up other labor broker companies to supply maintenance workers, enriching himself and his family on the backs of the superexploited workers. As part of the struggle to forge a Marxist workers party in Tunisia, it is vital to fight to replace the reformist leadership of the UGTT with a class-struggle leadership dedicated to the independence of the trade unions from the bourgeoisie and its state.

## For a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!

In fighting for working-class power, it would be impossible for a Marxist party in Tunisia merely to reject the bourgeois-democratic program. Rather, as Trotsky put it in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, "it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it." The Tunisian working masses are today saddled with a "transitional government" headed by a Ben Ali crony with elections suspended for six months, aiming for the emerging bourgeois regime to consolidate its power.

Thus, against the maneuverings of Tunisia's bourgeois rulers and their UGTT lackeys, we raise the call for immediate elections to convoke a ***revolutionary constituent assembly***, which could give free expression to the will of the population after decades of silence under the heel of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. This basic democratic demand will not be realized through parliamentary bargaining but only through a victorious popular insurrection.

Our call for a revolutionary constituent assembly is counterposed to calls for a constituent assembly raised by the reformists, who in fact envision parliamentary bargaining with the bourgeois authorities with the (illusory) aim of securing a democratic form of bourgeois rule. The Workers Communist Party of Tunisia (PCOT), a group with a Stalinist background that played a militant role in the Gafsa uprising, stands out for having straightforwardly denounced the governmental combinations formed after Ben Ali fled. Its spokesman Hamma Hammami told *l'Humanite* (17 January), newspaper of the French Communist Party, that the purpose of the provisional government was "to abort the democratic and popular movement," insisting: "We don't demand anything impossible, only the institution of a transitional government to form a constituent assembly in order to elaborate a constitution guaranteeing fundamental civil rights, freedom of expression, of association and of the press." Speaking plainly, PCOT simply wants, including through its call for a constituent assembly, a *capitalist government* but without those who have a history of collaboration with Ben Ali.

We raise the call for a revolutionary constituent assembly as a bridge between the current, legitimate democratic aspirations of the masses and the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would be based on soviets (workers councils)—i.e., proletarian democracy, a higher form of democracy than a bourgeois-democratic constituent assembly. As Trotsky underlined in the Transitional Program, "Democratic slogans, transitional demands, and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in this struggle, but stem directly from one another." He added:

> "At a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the national assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution."

Getty

**January 15 Paris rally in solidarity with Tunisian upheaval.**

## The Working Class Needs Its Own Organs of Power

In periods of acute class struggle, the trade unions, which typically organize the top layers of the proletariat, become too narrow to draw in the broad layers of masses in revolt, including unorganized workers. At the same time, the unions' bureaucratic misleaders strive to keep on top of the situation in order to derail the struggle. A Marxist party in Tunisia today would put forward a perspective of building organizations that embrace the whole fighting mass: strike committees, factory committees and, finally, soviets.

As Trotsky emphasized, soviets can only arise at the time when the mass movement enters into an openly revolutionary stage. Soviets originally arose amid the 1905 Russian Revolution as workers strike committees. When the soviets arose again during the course of the 1917 Russian Revolution, they embraced not only the workers but also soldiers and the peasantry, becoming organs of dual power. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the working class took power in Russia, with the soviets emerging as the organs of working-class rule.

Following Ben Ali's departure, local militias sprang up to defend neighborhoods against the rampages of cops and thugs allied with Ben Ali. What is necessary is for the working class to take the lead. This means organizing factory committees, organs of dual power at the point of production, and from there setting up workers militias, drawing in the urban poor and unemployed, for self-defense against the state's thugs. The workplace committees must, among their elementary demands, fight for jobs for the unemployed and an end to the intimidation and harassment of women workers, fighting for equal wages and benefits for women. Marxists must also fight for the workers to take charge of food distribution and control food prices in the face of shortages and black market corruption. In the Transitional Program, Trotsky underlined how the tasks and demands of such organs of dual power—i.e., proletarian-centered bodies that vie with the bourgeoisie for control of the country—run up against the very nature of the capitalist order:

> "These new organs and centers, however, will soon begin to feel their lack of cohesion and their insufficiency. Not one of the transitional demands can be fully met under the conditions of preserving the bourgeois regime. At the same time, the deepening of the social crisis will increase not only the sufferings of the masses but also their impatience, persistence, and pressure. Ever new layers of the oppressed will raise their heads and come forward with their demands. Millions of toilworn 'little men,' to whom the reformist leaders never gave a thought, will begin to pound insistently on the doors of the workers' organizations. The unemployed will join the movement. The agricultural workers, the ruined and semiruined farmers, the oppressed of the cities, the women workers, housewives, proletarianized layers of the intelligentsia—all of these will seek unity and leadership.
>
> "How are the different demands and forms of struggle to be harmonized, even if only within the limits of one city? History has already answered this question: through soviets."

## Stalinist "Two-Stage Revolution" Means Betrayal

Faced with decades of class-collaborationist betrayal by the Stalinist Communist Party (now called Ettajdid, meaning "Renewal") and other reformist parties, Tunisia's working and oppressed masses today do not identify their struggles with the fight for socialism. After decades of brutal dictatorship, there are deepgoing illusions in bourgeois democracy and nationalism.

Tunisian left groups have shown that they have learned nothing from their past betrayals, when many of them supported General Ben Ali's 1987 ascent to power as he deposed the then "president for life" Habib Bourguiba. We wrote at the time: "The Tunisian so-called left is giving the benefit of the doubt, if not their support, to the new Bonaparte, General Ben Ali, hoping for the liberalization of the regime" (*Le Bolchévik* No. 79, January 1988). Today, these left groups continue to bow before the ruling apparatus. Ettajdid leader Ahmed Ibrahim greeted Ben Ali's conciliatory speech on the day before his flight, declaring, "It is a good start to turn the page of authoritarianism" (*Le Monde*, 15 January). Ettajdid went so far as to participate in the government that was formed after the dictator's ousting.

Historically, Stalinists in the Third World advocated "two-stage revolution," with a first, democratic stage to be carried out in alliance with a mythical "progressive" and "democratic" wing of the bourgeoisie, which would then be followed in an indeterminate future by a second stage of socialist revolution. Time and again, these pipe dreams have ended with drowning the workers in blood; the second stage never comes. Once the capitalists have stabilized their power with the help of the Stalinists, they unleash a massacre of the Communists and working-class militants, as they did, for example, with the Iraqi revolution of 1958 (see "Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism," *WV* Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September 2000).

Today, however, groups like PCOT do not even go beyond mentioning the first

stage of achieving "democracy"—i.e., reformed bourgeois rule. Most recently, PCOT has joined a class-collaborationist bloc called the "January 14 Front"—named after the day Ben Ali left the country—with a number of small bourgeois formations, including Nasserist and Ba'athist nationalists. The Front's program is thoroughly bourgeois, including the demand for "a new policy of security based on respect for human rights and the superiority of the law."

Far from instilling the basic Marxist understanding that the military is part of the capitalist state, PCOT contributes to illusions in the army. In a statement dated January 15, PCOT wrote: "The armed forces, which consists in the main of the sons and daughters of the people, are required to provide safety for the people and the motherland and respect people's aspirations toward freedom, social justice and national dignity."

If the officer corps did oust Ben Ali, it was because they realized he was a losing proposition for Tunisian capitalism. In fact, the army was involved in the bloody repression of the Gafsa upheaval in 2008 and it will play a similar role in the future, all the more so as illusions still continue to run deep in its supposed role as the "defender of the people." On January 20, the army fired live rounds into the air, scattering protesters who had converged on the headquarters of the RCD in Tunis. The military, cops, judges and prison guards constitute the core of the capitalist state, an organ of class oppression to maintain bourgeois rule through violence. As the workers fight for their own state power, they will have to smash the bourgeois state apparatus, including by splitting the army along class lines—the conscripts versus the bourgeois officer corps.

Even at their most radical, the left groups in Tunisia at best demand a "democratic republic." They have abandoned any pretense of fighting for socialist revolution, reflecting the dramatic retrogression in consciousness that followed the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, a catastrophic defeat for the international working class.

## Islamic Fundamentalism and the Fight for Women's Liberation

The political bankruptcy of Tunisia's left groups could give an opening to the Islamic fundamentalists. This is a deadly threat to the working class and particularly to women. The Islamic fundamentalists played no visible role in the ousting of Ben Ali, unlike the many women who participated. Most demonstrators have vehemently stressed that they are not for Islamic rule. The mosques were indeed tightly controlled by the regime and supported Ben Ali.

The bourgeoisie internationally, especially in France, had for years supported the bloody Ben Ali regime as a rampart in the "war on terror" and as a vanguard in the fight for "secularism." In the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the U.S. and other imperialists went on to launch or participate in wars of depredation in Afghanistan and Iraq and to increase repression domestically, particularly against minorities with Muslim backgrounds. In France, the former popular-front government of Socialist Party prime minister Lionel Jospin, which included the Communist Party, reinforced the Vigipirate plan of police/army patrols of public transport, which has remained on "red alert" levels since 2005. The Jospin government also passed the "Daily Security Law" that strengthened police powers, which were further increased when Nicolas Sarkozy was interior minister and again now that he is president.

While the imperialists have used the "war on terror" to prop up "secular" leaders like Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt, in reality the imperialists long fostered the growth of Islamic fundamentalism as a bulwark against Communism and even left bourgeois nationalism. This is no less true of the Arab rulers, who brutally repress the fundamentalists with one hand while promoting them with the other. In a 1994 interview, Ben Ali himself stated that "to some extent fundamentalism was of our own making, and was at one time encouraged in order to combat the threat of communism. Such groups were fostered in the universities and elsewhere at that time in order to offset the communists and to strike a balance" (quoted in *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*, edited by Joel Beinin and Joe Stork [1997]).

Tunisian society is relatively secular compared with other countries in North Africa and the Near East. Many women do not wear the veil, abortion has been liberalized, contraception is available and polygamy is banned; "repudiation" (where a man can divorce his wife simply by uttering the phrase, "I divorce you") was replaced by civil divorce. These rights were mostly obtained under President Bourguiba in the early years after independence and in good part because Tunisia had a workers movement that was relatively independent of the state. However, as we wrote more than 20 years ago in *Le Bolchévik* No. 79, after Ben Ali seized power, Tunisia's Code of Personal Status is profoundly inspired by Islamic law, forcing women to be subordinate to their fathers and husbands:

> "Unmarried women remain under the authority of their father who must 'provide for them until marriage.' The husband must pay a dowry 'of a substantial amount' for his future wife, before the marriage is 'consummated.'... After marriage, women must obey their husbands. Sexual inequality in inheritance has been maintained: a woman inherits half the share of a man. The Tunisian Code of Personal Status, its constitution and legislation were designed as an awkward, fragile and reversible compromise between Islamic law and bourgeois 'modernity'."

Amnesty International

**Workers struggle in Gafsa mining region in 2008 was precursor to current upheaval.**

After 23 years of Ben Ali's rule, very little has changed in this respect, except that obeying your husband is no longer an obligation enshrined in law. However, importantly, the proportion of women in the workforce has increased to nearly 30 percent from just 5.5 percent in the mid 1960s, underlining their increasing role as a vital component of the proletariat.

Fundamentally, women's oppression is rooted in the institution of the family and in class society. It can be eradicated only after a revolutionary workers state has collectivized the economy and laid the material basis for replacing the family through the socialization of child rearing and education (see "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006). The reforms gained under Bourguiba and Ben Ali—that is about as far as it can go for women under capitalism in such a neocolonial country. The fight for women's emancipation will play a vital role in the struggle for socialist revolution in Tunisia.

## French Imperialism's Loyal Social Democrats

In response to the Tunisian upheaval, the social-democratic left in France has sowed illusions in French imperialism. Of course, they all criticized the French foreign minister's offer to send security forces to help prop up Ben Ali. At bottom, these social democrats have been furious that the Sarkozy government's grotesque support to the Ben Ali regime is going to weaken the position of French imperialism in a post-Ben Ali Tunisia. This is felt in particular with regard to French imperialism's U.S. rivals, who had been privately critical of the Ben Ali regime and reportedly gave the green light to General Ammar to order Ben Ali to leave the country. With U.S. imperialism hypocritically offering to help organize "free elections" in Tunisia, French Socialist Party honcho Jean-Marc Ayrault lamented that the French government took "positions that disqualify France in the eyes of the world and Tunisians."

So now the social-democratic left is calling on the same Sarkozy government to be a force for good in Tunisia. The Left Party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who from 2000 to 2002 was a minister in Jospin's bourgeois government, distributed a statement in Paris on January 13, the day before Ben Ali's flight, demanding that "the government of M. Sarkozy as well as the European Union use the many forms of pressure available to them to force Ben Ali to listen to the popular demands and engage without delay in the deep democratic reforms that are essential in the country." Similarly, the Communist Party demanded that Sarkozy and other EU leaders "condemn the repression and take political, economic and financial sanctions against the Ben Ali regime" (*l'Humanite*, 14 January). This was printed on the very day that the French government was getting a planeload of tear gas ready for Tunisia! This should be no surprise: The social democrats and Stalinists have steadfastly defended French imperialist interests, from the war against Algerian independence waged by the Socialist Guy Mollet government, with the Communist Party's support, in the 1950s to the defense of present-day French interests in Africa.

The New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) of Olivier Besancenot has been slightly more sophisticated in its attempts to pressure the government. While calling on France to give up its "little neocolonial arrangements" in its former colonies of Tunisia and Algeria, the NPA, in a Paris leaflet distributed on January 13, condemned the "French government's quasi silence" on the Tunisian uprising as "intolerable." At home the NPA works to subordinate the working class to the bourgeoisie through class collaboration; similarly in regard to Tunisia it uncritically promotes the "January 14 Front" that includes PCOT and a number of small bourgeois parties.

## For Permanent Revolution!

The impact of the Tunisian uprising has already reverberated across North Africa and the Near East (see accompanying article on Egypt). Amid the international economic crisis, the masses in countries like Egypt have been reeling from major increases in basic food and fuel prices, fostered by runaway speculation by international capitalist financiers (see "Imperialism Starves World's Poor," *WV* Nos. 919 and 920, 29 August and 12 September 2008, on the previous speculation-fed food crisis). Egypt is exploding. In Algeria, protests have spread throughout the country against the government of the ailing Abdelaziz Bouteflika, a figurehead for the military, which has dominated Algeria since independence.

A workers revolution in Tunisia would have tremendous impact throughout North Africa and the Near East. Workers uprisings could sweep away all these rotting regimes and begin to address the fundamental demands of the masses for jobs, freedom and justice. Imperialist France, the neocolonial overlord of the whole Maghreb region of North Africa, would be profoundly shaken, especially given the strategic position in the French proletariat of millions of workers of North African origin. What is essential is the forging of revolutionary workers parties like the Bolshevik Party that led the working class of Russia to power in the 1917 October Revolution—parties committed to the program of permanent revolution, addressing the burning needs of the masses and unalterably leading them to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat. This is the program of the International Communist League. ***For a socialist federation of North Africa!*** ■


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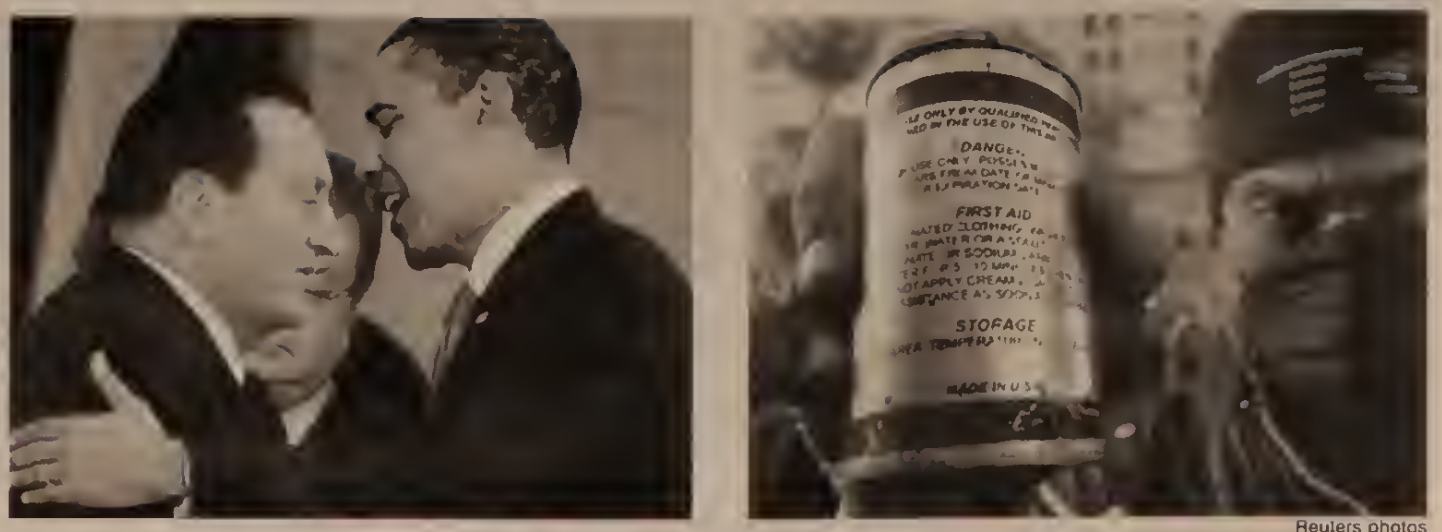
# Egypt...

*(continued from page 1)*

and the Near East. The arrogant imperialists, who act as though nothing can stand in the way of their rampages around the world, are now faced with threats to the survival of crucial client regimes. The Obama administration desperately seeks to quell the upheavals in North Africa and prevent their further spread. Jordan and Yemen, an outpost in Washington's "war on terror," have already seen mass anti-government demonstrations (dominated by Islamic opposition movements). Today, Jordan's King Abdullah fired his cabinet. Meanwhile, student demonstrations have begun in Sudan. What is particularly remarkable about the mass protests in Tunisia and Egypt is that in a region long dominated by religious and ethnic strife, they have centered on secular-democratic demands, spurred by increasingly intolerable conditions of life.

The immediate spark for the upsurge in Egypt was the mass protest movement that overthrew the Ben Ali dictatorship in Tunisia. But there was ample social tinder ready to be ignited. With nearly half the




Reuters photos

**Mubarak welcomes U.S. imperialist chief Obama to Cairo, June 2009. Tear gas used against protesters is "Made in U.S.A." as Washington provides bonapartist regime with $1.3 billion annually in military aid.**

Nasser Nouri

**December 2006: Strike by more than 20,000 textile workers in Ghazl el-Mahalla, part of wave of labor struggle in Egypt in recent years.**

Egyptian population scraping by on $2 a day or less, the last few years have seen a wave of militant strike activity. Unemployment was massive even before the outbreak of the international financial crisis. Rural areas, especially in southern Egypt and the northern Nile Delta, are marked by excruciating poverty, with landless peasants at the mercy of ruthless landlords. Corruption among the ruling elite is notorious. Expressions of discontent are regularly met with brutal police beatings, torture and imprisonment.

The unraveling of the Mubarak dictatorship has thrown its U.S. imperialist patrons into crisis mode. Every year, Washington pumps $1.3 billion in military aid into the regime, the second-largest recipient of U.S. aid after Israel. Egypt has been a linchpin of U.S. imperialist interests in the Near East, especially since 1979 when it became the first Arab country to sign a peace agreement with Israel. The Egyptian regime has long served as an accomplice to the Zionist state in oppressing the Palestinian people, currently by policing the southern border of the Gaza Strip. Down with U.S. aid to Egypt, Israel! Defend the Palestinian people!

Having declared the Mubarak regime "stable" at the onset of the protests, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was compelled to shift her approach as the upheaval spread, intoning about "the universal rights of the Egyptian people." Demonstrators were hardly assuaged, with many holding up tear gas canisters with "Made in the U.S.A." labels for reporters. Washington is now talking about an "orderly transition." Meanwhile, it's finalizing "plans to evacuate thousands of US nationals to 'safe havens' in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus" (*Financial Times*, 31 January). A much-touted "transitional" figure is Mohamed ElBaradei, a bourgeois liberal who helped work out the 1978 Camp David Accords that normalized relations between Egypt and Israel and later headed the International Atomic Energy Agency, where he helped ensure that Saddam Hussein's Iraq was disarmed in the face of U.S. war preparations.

## Working Class Must Take the Lead

What is urgently posed in Egypt today is that the powerful proletariat—the only class with the social power to overturn the brutal and decrepit capitalist order—emerge as the leader of all the oppressed masses. The current upsurge comes amid a years-long strike wave that historian Joel Beinin described as "the largest social movement Egypt has witnessed in more than half a century" (*The Struggle for Worker Rights in Egypt*, February 2010). His study tallied an average of 194 strikes and sit-ins per year from 2004 through 2008, nearly four times the rate of the previous three years.

The spike in factory occupations, strikes and demonstrations started in 2004 when the government stepped up the pace of privatization of state enterprises. The spearhead of this movement has been the workers at Mahalla al-Kobra textile mills, the country's largest industrial complex with some 40,000 workers. In April 2008, as people groaned under soaring food prices, a planned strike was headed off by a massive show of police force. This touched off two days of rioting in which three people died by police fire. After the government granted the workers a bonus, a close adviser to Mubarak haughtily and fatuously told the *Washington Post* (27 September 2009): "Once you give more money to those people, it's over."

Mahalla al-Kobra workers walked out on the very first day of the current protests, directly opposing the regime for the first time since the start of the strike wave. Workers in Suez, a port city and oil refining center, have also been out from the beginning. Police there showed no mercy in trying to smash the protests. In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (31 January), Mansoura Ez-Eldin cites a message from a friend describing Suez as a war zone: "Its streets were burned and destroyed, dead bodies were strewn everywhere." But the city's working-class residents *fought back*.

The often exemplary militancy of Egyptian workers has repeatedly run up against the treachery of the regime's bought-and-paid-for officials of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), who are integrated into the capitalist state apparatus. At the 1957 founding of the federation that would become the ETUF, its entire leadership was appointed by the regime of bourgeois-nationalist strongman Gamal Abdel Nasser. For over two decades, the president of the ETUF usually doubled as Minister of Labor. Today, virtually every member of the ETUF executive committee is a member of the ruling NDP; ETUF president Hussein Megawer was head of the NDP parliamentary bloc and currently chairs the parliamentary Committee on Manpower. Last week, he instructed union officials to head off any labor demonstrations. As police were shooting protesters down on January 25, the ETUF issued a statement congratulating the Interior Ministry in celebration of "Police Day"!

In the course of the recent strike wave, Egyptian workers have acted in defiance of the regime's "labor lieutenants." Because strikes must by law be approved by the ETUF leadership, every one that took place was illegal. Often the workers elected strike committees to provide leadership, commonly raising the demand for independent unions. This points to the potential for broad organs of working-class struggle to emerge out of the current political turmoil, such as factory committees and workers defense guards as well as neighborhood committees to oversee the distribution of food and to organize self-defense against the police thugs and their criminal accomplices. All this underscores the need to fight for the independence of the working class from the capitalist state and all bourgeois political forces.

## For a Leninist Vanguard Party!

As in Tunisia, what is necessary in Egypt is the forging of a revolutionary party that can lead the fight for a workers and peasants government. Such a party would be, in the words of Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin, a "tribune of the people," fighting against the oppression of peasants, women, youth, homosexuals and ethnic and religious minorities.

A Leninist vanguard party would champion women's emancipation in Egypt, where "honor killings" and female genital mutilation are common practices, especially in the rural areas where some 60 percent of the population lives. It would also actively defend the rights of

WV Photo

**NYC protest against Mubarak regime, January 29.**

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# Mexico...

*(continued from page 6)*

When Díaz left Veracruz to go into exile, he was heard to say in reference to Madero: "I hope he can tame the tiger he let out of the cage." The tiger he was referring to was the immense peasant uprising. The intra-bourgeois conflict between Madero and Diaz had indeed opened the tiger's cage. The agrarian question—the land hunger of millions of peasants—was revealed as the most burning and explosive question of the revolution. Madero's unfulfilled promises quickly provoked conflicts with the forces of Emiliano Zapata, who controlled the state of Morelos. Meanwhile, various strikes broke out in industry.

By the end of 1912, the Madero regime, in power for a little more than a year, was already in deep crisis, trapped between popular discontent and reactionary forces, both domestic and imperialist, that were determined to re-establish "order." In February 1913, in a coup plotted from the U.S. Embassy, Madero was overthrown and shot by General Victoriano Huerta. Huerta's coup unleashed popular anger and energized the peasant forces of Francisco Villa in the north and the guerrillas of Emiliano Zapata in the south. Partly because of Huerta's connections to Britain, the Americans later began to support the Constitutionalist forces of Venustiano Carranza and Villa, which had taken up arms against the new dictatorship.

Southern Methodist University

**June 1906: Cananea copper miners mass in front of mine owner during historic strike that helped set stage for the struggle against Porfirio Díaz dictatorship.**

### The Taking of Mexico City and Bourgeois Reaction

With the fall of the Huerta dictatorship in July 1914, the victorious anti-Huerta forces immediately fell apart. The more conservative bourgeois wing of Venustiano Carranza and Alvaro Obregón, representing the northern bourgeois elites and the radical petty bourgeoisie, was more adept than Villa. In a military race, Obregón's forces occupied Mexico City on 15 August 1914, although not for long. With the definitive split between Villa and Zapata on one side and Carranza and Obregón on the other, after the Convention of Aguascalientes in November 1914, a new and acute phase of the Mexican Revolution began.

Lacking sufficient supplies to hold on to Mexico City, the Carrancistas withdrew to Veracruz. The victorious peasant armies of Zapata and Villa took the capital in December 1914. Veracruz had been occupied by the U.S. since 21 April 1913. In an agreement Carranza made with the occupiers, he obtained a large reserve of arms and provisions as the U.S. forces evacuated the city. It is significant that when the U.S. took Veracruz for the first time, Carranza made an impassioned nationalist speech and criticized them harshly for the occupation (although it was designed to benefit him), while Villa remained silent, not wanting the enmity of the U.S., which supplied him with arms.

In this regard, it is interesting to analyze the occupation of the capital by Villa's and Zapata's peasant armies, as well as their withdrawal. The regional, petty-bourgeois peasant perspective of Villa and Zapata meant that these radical leaders did not know what to do when, upon taking the capital, they had state power within reach. This is despite the fact that they had arms and the overwhelming sympathy of the population, which welcomed them with great jubilation (including many workers who months later would be joining Carranza's "red battalions" to put down the rebellion). The limited demands for more democracy and land distribution in the villages, like the Plan of Ayala, were insufficient as a national political program and a means for Villa and Zapata to hold on to power in the urban centers. It was a movement based on the peasantry, and as such, was limited by that ideology.

Along the same lines, it is notable that during this conflict, which lasted almost a decade, none of the warring factions created a political formation—a party—with any consistency. The Mexican Revolution was led mainly by spontaneously arising peasant leaders or by regional military leaders. Trotsky explained the political inability of the Russian peasantry, as a class, to lead a revolution, a characteristic that can be extended to the Mexican peasantry:

> "The peasantry is dispersed over the surface of an enormous country whose key junctions are the cities. The peasantry itself is incapable of even formulating its own interests inasmuch as in each district these appear differently. The economic link between the provinces is created by the market and the railways, but both the market and the railways are in the hands of the cities. In seeking to tear itself away from the restrictions of the village and to generalize its own interests, the peasantry inescapably falls into political dependence upon the city. Finally, the peasantry is heterogeneous in its social relations as well: the kulak [rich peasant] stratum naturally seeks to swing it to an alliance with the urban bourgeoisie while the nether strata of the village pull to the side of the urban workers. Under these conditions the peasantry as such is completely incapable of conquering power."
>
> —"Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution," 1939

An anecdotal but illustrative example of this inability of the peasantry to assume power in its own name happened during a meeting of the Villa-Zapata Convention in Mexico City. A large group of poor women was demonstrating against famine in front of this assembly, and the only answer the Convention could come up with was to pass the hat to collect a bit of money for them! In other words, Villa and Zapata did not have, nor could they have on their own, the program to use these latent forces for a victorious revolutionary—that is to say, proletarian and socialist—solution. When Villa and Zapata occupied the capital, they certainly did not touch the church, which was a bastion of the most reactionary elements of the ruling class in Mexico and an enemy of the poor peasantry. The upper ranks of the Catholic hierarchy in the capital certainly were a different animal from those humble village priests who were won to Zapatismo. This was one more nail in the coffin of the peasant rebellion.

The bourgeois wing of Carranza, conscious of the political weakness of the peasant armies, was able to reorganize and pursued the forces of the Zapatista Convention until finally defeating them. Obregón effectively avoided the capital in order to confront Villa, who had the principal mobile forces of the Convention, in decisive battles in the north and in El Bajío [lowlands of central Mexico]. By the end of 1915, Villa's powerful División del Norte had been dismantled. On 10 April 1919, Zapata was ambushed and slaughtered.

In July 1923, bourgeois reaction caught up to Villa, who had retired to private life and become a well-to-do *hacendado* in Chihuahua. He was still a symbol for the peasantry. When he supported the local bourgeois Adolfo de la Huerta against Obregón's group, Villa was massacred and his body decapitated. (It was a very different story on the other side of the world, when in October 1917 the gigantic Russian "peasant bear," hungry for land and justice, found a revolutionary leadership in a young and resolute working class and the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky.)

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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the Coptic Christian minority, which suffers discrimination and violent persecution at the hands of the state, abetted by pogromist incitement by Islamic fundamentalists. In December, when Copts protested against the government's refusal to allow them to set up a church in Cairo, two were shot dead by riot police. This gave a green light to the bombing of an Alexandria church on New Year's Eve that killed 23 people. Joint protests by Copts and Muslims against the bombing were attacked by riot cops.

A key task for revolutionary Marxists is to combat the widespread nationalist ideology that is evident among the protesters waving Egyptian flags and embracing the army as the supposed friend of the exploited and the oppressed. Many rank-and-file soldiers of the conscript army have fraternized with demonstrators, even allowing them to paint anti-Mubarak graffiti on their tanks. But it is the military brass—subsidized and trained by the U.S. imperialists—that is calling the shots.

Illusions in the army run deep in Egypt, where military officers led by Nasser overthrew the despised British-backed monarchy in 1952. While Nasser, with the support of the Stalinist Communist Party, would lay claim to leadership of a mythical "Arab socialism," he aimed from the beginning to crush the combative working class. One month after coming to power, Nasser seized on a textile workers strike in Kafr Al-Dawwar near Alexandria to deliver a dramatic blow to the workers movement. Two strike leaders were hanged on the factory grounds, the Communists were banned and strikes were outlawed. Subsequently, Nasser turned on his Communist supporters with a vengeance, rounding up almost every known leftist in the country.

Even as their comrades were beaten to death or left to die for lack of medical aid, the Stalinists maintained their political support to this bonapartist ruler, officially liquidating into his Arab Socialist Union in 1965. Stalinist parties throughout the Near East and North Africa sacrificed their proletarian bases on tbe altar of bourgeois nationalism, betraying historic opportunities for socialist revolution. This opened the door to reactionary Islamic fundamentalists like Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood—a deadly enemy of women, Copts, secularists and leftists—to posture as the only firm opponents of the unbearable status quo. While suffering severe repression, the Muslim Brotherhood has also been tolerated, and at times promoted, by successive Egyptian regimes. Mubarak has often silenced his opponents by claiming that if not for him, the Brotherhood would rule Egypt.

The Muslim Brotherhood plays little role in the workers movement but is heavily entrenched in the lumpenproletariat of the impoverished slums and among professionals and other petty-bourgeois layers. Many protesters today say that they would oppose the Brotherhood coming to power. Nevertheless, its emergence in the protests points to the threat that it could win a hearing among the desperate masses. The need to politically combat the forces of Islamic reaction was highlighted by the events in Iran in 1978-79, when the Shi'ite clergy under Ayatollah Khomeini succeeded in subordinating to its reactionary agenda a powerful wave of opposition to the hated Shah that included the organizations of the working class.

After having been supported by virtually every left group in Iran, Khomeini unleashed a murderous wave of terror against worker militants, leftists, Kurds, unveiled women and homosexuals. Uniquely on the left, the international Spartacist tendency, predecessor to the International Communist League, declared: Down with the Shah! Don't bow to Khomeini! For workers revolution in Iran! In regard to Egypt today, we say: Down with Mubarak! No to ElBaradei and the Muslim Brotherhood! Workers to power!

It is vitally important for leftists and proletarian militants to study the example of the Bolshevik Party, which provided the necessary leadership for the working class in Russia in 1917. As soviets (workers councils) re-emerged with the fall of the tsar in the February Revolution, Lenin's Bolsheviks raised the call "All power to the Soviets," opposing any political support to the bourgeois Provisional Government. Amid rapidly growing opposition to the slaughter of working-class and peasant soldiers in the interimperialist World War I, soviets spread to the peasantry, which was in open rebellion against the landlords, and into the military as well. Under the influence of the organized working class, the soldiers councils served to set the worker and peasant ranks of the military against the bourgeois officer corps. Following the Bolshevik-led October Revolution, the soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers deputies became the organs of the new proletarian state power.

As elaborated in the accompanying article on Tunisia, revolutionary Marxists, based on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, must put forward transitional demands linking the masses' democratic aspirations to the struggle for proletarian power and for its international extension. Out of the ferment in Egypt, the International Communist League seeks to cohere the nucleus of a Leninist-Trotskyist party, the indispensible instrument for the victory of proletarian revolution. ■

Two-part series appeared in *WV* No. 740, 25 August 2000 and No. 741, 8 September 2000

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WORKERS VANGUARD

## More Subpoenas Against Midwest Leftists

# FBI Infiltration Exposed

CHICAGO—In a further escalation of its war on civil liberties, in December the Obama administration issued federal grand jury subpoenas to nine leftists and Palestine solidarity activists in Chicago. The subpoenas follow raids last September 24 in Illinois and Minnesota in which scores of FBI agents descended on the homes of 14 activists, including well-known trade unionists, antiwar organizers and several supporters of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO), which publishes *Fight Back!* newspaper. The Feds seized cell phones and passports and carted away vanloads of boxes filled with personal papers, address books and computer disks.

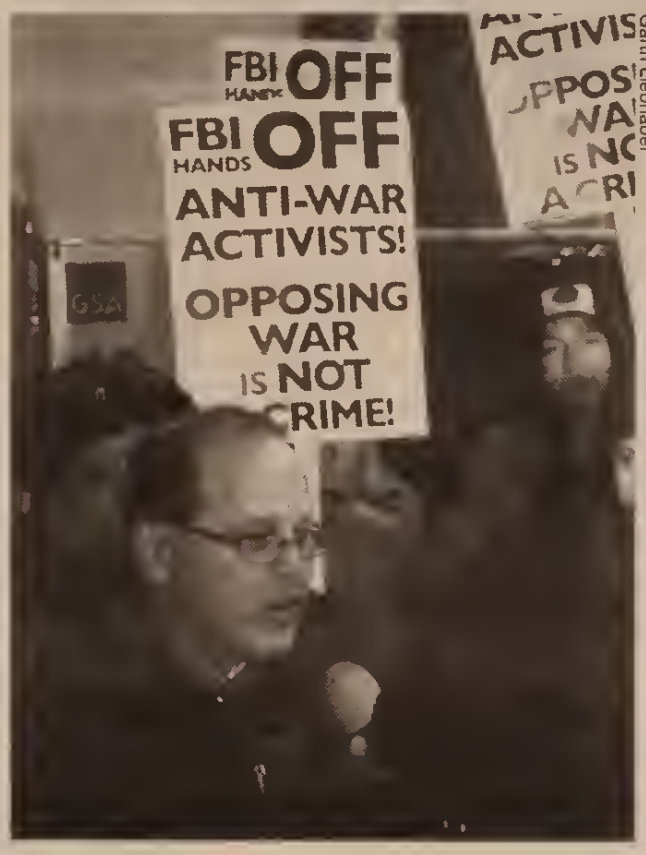
With its vendetta against these leftists, the Obama administration has one-upped the Bush regime in its war on civil liberties. Investigated for providing "material support to terrorism" on the basis of purported links to the secular-nationalist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the leftists' "crime" in the eyes of the U.S. rulers is their siding with victims of the Zionist butchers and Colombian death squads. Those who manage to avoid bogus charges of "support to terrorism" may still face years of imprisonment on charges of "criminal contempt" for the honorable act of refusing to name names before the grand jury inquisitors.

This witchhunt is a stark confirmation of how the shredding of civil liberties in the name of the "war on terror," while at first mainly targeting Arab and Muslim immigrants, is ultimately aimed at the left and the entire labor movement. As the Spartacist League warned in a statement issued one day after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, both the Democrats and Republicans would seize on the event to reinforce capitalist class rule. As we wrote in "The World Trade Center Attack" (*WV* No. 764, 14 September 2001):

> "It's an opportunity for the exploiters to peddle 'one nation indivisible' patriotism to try to direct the burgeoning anger at the bottom of this society away from themselves and toward an indefinable foreign 'enemy,' as well as immigrants in the U.S., and to reinforce their arsenal of domestic state repression against all the working people."

It is vitally necessary for the left, the labor movement and fighters for black and immigrant rights to defend those caught up in the government witchhunt. The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have participated in protests on the Midwest leftists' behalf, demanding that all the subpoenas be withdrawn, that no charges be filed and that materials seized by the Feds be returned. The vendetta against these leftists, a blatant attack on the rights of speech and association, is intended to intimidate into silence anyone who would protest government policies at home and wars and depredations abroad.

At a January 12 press conference in Minneapolis, FRSO supporters exposed how this whole "investigation" stems from police surveillance and disruption of protests against the 2008 Republican National Convention (RNC). The Feds have now admitted that one government agent, using the name Karen Sullivan, infiltrated the Minneapolis Anti-War Committee (AWC) and later joined FRSO. "Sullivan" pushed herself into the forefront of local activism. She joined a vanload who traveled to the annual protest at the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia, where the U.S. military trains its Latin American counterparts in murder and torture, and gave a workshop on the counterinsurgency "Plan Colombia" at last year's U.S. Social Forum in Detroit. This agent also insinuated herself into a three-person AWC Palestinian solidarity delegation to the Occupied Territories in 2009, which was stopped by Israeli immigration agents as soon as it arrived in Tel Aviv, presumably based on information "Sullivan" supplied.



Garth Liebhaber

**January 25: Chicago protest against witchhunt of antiwar activists is addressed by Joe Iosbaker, one of those targeted by FBI.**

"Sullivan" was only one of a host of undercover agents and informants who swarmed over the RNC protests. Many were paid thousands of dollars to spy on, disrupt and set up organizers for arrest. "The Policing of Political Speech," a report issued by the National Lawyers Guild last September, exposed the central role of these agents in the prosecution of the RNC 8. These protest organizers were initially charged with "terrorism" based on acts of civil disobedience and disruption by a few anarchist youth—trivial acts that used to be vindictively charged as "disorderly conduct."

Liberals and the reformist left, including the FRSO, promoted the illusion that Obama's election would mark a sharp turn from the regime of George W. Bush. But as we pointed out at the time, Obama's promises to clean up the worst "excesses" of the Bush gang were driven by his commitment to wage the "war on terror" more effectively. From the indefinite detention of "enemy combatants" at Guantánamo to National Security Agency domestic wiretapping, Obama has embraced every one of the repressive tools handed him by Bush (and Bush's predecessor, Bill Clinton).

Last June, the U.S. Supreme Court handed the Justice Department the authority, which it had long sought, to prosecute the exercise of First Amendment rights of speech and association as support to terrorism. In *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, the court ruled that to advise the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or the Kurdistan Workers Party on how to appeal to the United Nations in regard to their struggles against the genocidal wars waged by the Sri Lankan and Turkish governments would constitute "material support" to terrorism. We wrote in response that "by the Court's light, any activity that is considered as giving legitimacy to 'terrorists'—from giving money to Muslim charities to interviewing a guerrilla fighter for the press—would be deemed 'material support'" ("Supreme Court Decision Shreds First Amendment Rights," *WV* No. 961, 2 July 2010). Just three months later, the FBI launched its raids.

As reported by *Fight Back!*, "it seems that the investigation of U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald is focused on small donations to the day-care and women's center projects of the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees." Promoting education, day care and other relief for Palestinian refugee women and political prisoners, this group has had ties to the PFLP, which is designated as "terrorist" by the U.S. government.

For the blood-drenched U.S. imperialists, the designation of "foreign terrorist organization" is elastic and constantly shifting. It has included such organizations as Nelson Mandela's African National Congress during the reign of apartheid in South Africa. The Islamic reactionaries of Al Qaeda top the U.S. hit list today, but in the 1980s their forebears were hailed—and bankrolled—by the U.S. as "freedom fighters" against the Soviet Union. In "Why Reagan Needs 'Terrorism'," (*WV* No. 347, 3 February 1984) we wrote: "For the bourgeoisie, 'terrorism' is violence associated with causes of which they disapprove, the use of force outside their own monopoly of violence: strikers defending their picket lines, black people protecting their communities against racist nightriders, Central American peasants fighting back against the landlords' army and hired killers."

America's rulers have a long history of harassing and criminalizing leftist dissent—from the legal lynching of the Haymarket Martyrs for organizing for the eight-hour day, to the Palmer Raids that led to the deportation of thousands of foreign-born radicals after World War I, and the Smith Act prosecution of leaders of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party on the eve of World War II. The postwar purges that drove the Stalinists and other leftists out of the unions, coming on the heels of the largest strike wave in U.S. history, were the domestic reflection of the Cold War against the Soviet Union. In the 1960s, those who protested against U.S. imperialism's dirty war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants were painted as traitors, while the government unleashed its secret police against fighters for black rights at home, assassinating 38 Black Panther Party members and railroading hundreds more to prison.

Ominously, one of the Chicago activists subpoenaed in December is Maureen Murphy, managing editor of the online publication *Electronic Intifada*, who had helped spearhead the defense of those targeted in the September raids. As a January 24 protest letter to Attorney General Eric Holder by the PDC stated: "The clear implication is that anyone who defends the civil liberties of those smeared as 'terrorists' will themselves in turn be targeted as 'terrorists'."

Ultimately, what the racist capitalist rulers can get away with will be determined by the level of class and social struggle. As Marxists, we understand that there will be no justice served until the imperialist exploiters, war criminals and witchhunters are swept from power through a socialist revolution that overturns capitalist class rule and establishes a workers government.

### Agent Exposed

Committee to Stop FBI Repression

**"Karen Sullivan," FBI plant**

* * *

*Funds are urgently needed for the legal defense of the subpoenaed Midwest activists. Donations can be sent to Committee to Stop FBI Repression, PO Box 14183, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Letters of protest can be sent to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001.*■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 974

18 February 2011


# Mass Upheaval Topples Hated Mubarak

AP photos

# Egypt: Military Takeover Props Up Capitalist Rule

**Above left: Protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square celebrate Mubarak's ouster, February 11. Above right: Soldiers on guard in Tahrir Square, February 12, after military assumed power in defense of capitalist "order."**

FEBRUARY 14—For nearly 30 years, he governed Egypt with an iron fist. But on February 11, after 18 days of an unprecedented upheaval capped by a wave of strikes, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak was finally forced to resign as president, handing power over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Mass celebrations of millions of people from all walks of life erupted in Cairo's Tahrir (Liberation) Square and in cities throughout the country—jubilation over the seeming end of a venal and corrupt dictatorship that ruled under emergency law, imprisoning and disappearing its opponents in Egypt's vast torture chambers.

Inspired by the uprising in Tunisia, where protesters braved severe repression to topple the dictatorship of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt exploded beginning on January 25. Protesters courageously faced down a massive crackdown by the despised Central Security Forces that left at least 300 dead. Throughout the country—from the capital to Alexandria in the north and Aswan in the south, from industrial centers like Mahalla al-Kobra, Suez and Port Said to desert towns like Kharga in the Sahara and al-Arish in Sinai—demonstrators unleashed their fury at the regime by targeting police and security buildings as well as those belonging to the ruling National Democratic Party.

Mubarak is toppled. But the central pillar of Egypt's bonapartist capitalist state apparatus, the military, is now directly in power. The military has announced the dissolution of Mubarak's sham parliament and the formation of a panel to amend a constitution that has never been worth the paper it was written on. As we warned in our last article on the protests in Egypt, "Make no mistake: there remains the dire threat that whatever happens to Mubarak, Egypt's bourgeois rulers will demand fierce military repression to restore and maintain capitalist 'order'" (*WV* No. 973, 4 February). Scuffles have broken out between protesters in Tahrir Square and soldiers trying to remove them. With rumors circulating that the regime will ban strikes, on February 14 the military issued Communiqué No. 5, which denounced strikes as leading to "negative results" and ordered workers to return to their jobs.

AP

**February 9: As workers struggles erupt throughout Egypt, Suez Canal Company workers in Ismailia City begin strike demanding resignation of boss, pay raise and social equality.**

Bourgeois oppositionists—from liberal democrats like Mohamed ElBaradei and his National Association for Change, Kefaya's George Ishak and the Ghad party's Ayman Nour to the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood—have all embraced the military in the interest of restoring stability. The ubiquitous Egyptian flags waving in the protests, which drew virtually all layers of society other than the upper echelons of the bourgeoisie, reflected a deep-seated nationalist consciousness. Born of a history of imperialist subjugation, nationalism has long served Egypt's bourgeois rulers by obscuring the *class divide* between the tiny layer of filthy rich at the top and the brutally exploited and impoverished working class.

Today, this nationalism is most clearly expressed in the belief that the military is the "friend of the people." From the time of Gamal Abdel Nasser's 1952 Free Officers coup, which toppled the monarchy and ended the British occupation of the country, the army has been viewed as the guarantor of Egyptian national sovereignty. In fact, the military has been the backbone of one dictatorship after another since 1952. That year, it was mobilized by Nasser to shoot down textile strikers in Kafr Al-Dawwar near Alexandria. In 1977, it was mobilized by Anwar el-Sadat to "restore order" after a two-day countrywide upheaval over the price of bread. Just last week, the army facilitated murderous attacks by plainclothes cops and hired thugs of the regime against protesters occupying Tahrir

*continued on page 13*

**For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**
**For a Workers and Peasants Government!**

# Honor Harriet Tubman, Abolitionist Hero

University of North Carolina

One of the many contributions of our comrade Martha Phillips was her research and presentation on Harriet Tubman, a hero in the fight to smash slavery ("Harriet Tubman: Fighter for Black Freedom," *Women and Revolution* No. 32, Winter 1986-87, reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 5, February 1988). Martha was tragically murdered in Moscow in February 1992 under suspicious circumstances, as she led our struggle to bring the authentic communism of Lenin and Trotsky to Soviet workers facing the ravages of capitalist counterrevolution. In honor of Martha Phillips, and to commemorate Black History Month, we print below selections from her salute to Harriet Tubman, which provides a succinct analysis of the intersection of race, sex and class in America.

"General Tubman," as John Brown dubbed her, stood in the revolutionary insurrectionist wing of the abolitionist movement in the struggle against the Southern slavocracy. A fugitive slave, Tuhman played a crucial role in the Underground Railroad and became known as the Moses of her people. In the Civil War, she was a scout and spy for the Union Army and led 300 black soldiers in a military action on South Carolina's Combahee River in June 1863. Tubman saw early on that the war for the union must become a war to free the slaves. But the promise of black freedom offered by the Union Army's victory over the South was subsequently betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie, marked by the defeat of Radical Reconstruction. This betrayal was cruelly experienced by the impoverished Tubman, who suffered physical attack and brutal segregation and was compelled to wage a decades-long battle for the pension that her Civil War service entitled her to. As Tubman acidly stated: "You wouldn't think that after I served the flag so faithfully I should come to want in its folds."

To learn more about Martha Phillips, see *Prometheus Research Series* No. 6, "Selected Speeches and Writings in Honor of Three Women Leaders of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist): Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, Elizabeth King Robertson." To order, send check for $7.00 to Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

* * *

The situation of the triply oppressed black woman slave more than any other cried out for liberation. Even the right to raise their own children was often denied to these women, whose masters could sell them or any member of their family at will. The life of Harriet Tubman illustrates in a particularly acute fashion the tremendous obstacles black women faced regarding even the elementary decencies of life. Despite her courageous work for black freedom...she lived in poverty all her life....

Having completed their revolution against slavery—the last great bourgeois revolution—the Northern capitalists turned their backs on the blacks. Although they may have been opposed to property in human flesh, the robber barons of the late 19th century allied with Southern landholders for private property in the means of production. Even the most basic of political rights, the right to vote, was denied to all women at this time, both black and white. The capitalist reaction flowed from the inherent inability of a system based on private ownership of the means of production to eliminate scarcity, the economic source of all social inequality. Only abolition of private property will remove the social roots of racial and sexual oppression....

Marx said, "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." The destruction of slavery signaled the birth of the American labor movement, the rise of unions and agitation for the eight-hour day. Blacks today play a strategic role in the American working class. Over the years mass migration from the rural South into the cities, both North and South, has transformed the black population from a largely rural, agricultural layer into an urban, industrial group. As an oppressed race-color caste integrated at the bottom of the U.S. economy, blacks suffer from capitalist exploitation compounded with vicious racial oppression—for them, the "American dream" is a nightmare! In precise Marxist terms black people are the reserve army of the unemployed, last hired, first fired, a crucial economic component of the boom/bust cycle of the capitalist mode of production. Thus Marx's words are all too true today: the fight for black liberation is the fight for the emancipation of all working people. It is the race question—the poison of racism—that keeps the American working class divided. As long as the labor movement does not take up the struggle of black people, there will be no struggle for any emancipation—just as the Civil War could not be won without the freeing and arming of the slaves.

Today the oppressed and exploited must look to the red banner of socialist revolution for their liberation. The Spartacist League raises the slogans, "Finish the Civil War! Forward to the Third American Revolution!" to express the historic tasks which fall to the revolutionary party. ■

## Letter

## Liebknecht and the Spartacists

30 January

To the Editor,

*WV* No. 972 (21 January 2011) appropriately marked January as the banner month of the 3Ls under the headline, "Honor Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht" by publishing Karl Liebknecht's 2 December 1914 statement motivating his lone vote that day in the German Reichstag (parliament) against its military budget for the inter-imperialist First World War. As *WV* noted, Liebknecht was prohibited from delivering his statement from the floor of the Reichstag, from entering it into the record, or from publishing it in the Kaiser's Germany.

I want to add that Liebknecht's statement has a special significance for us Spartacists. It did appear that same month as an illegal leallet—the first of a series of newsletters that the supporters of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg began to issue clandestinely. These beacons of revolutionary internationalism were distributed throughout the Reich via underground channels, summoning German workers to civil war against the imperialist war. These newsletters mercilessly lashed both the overtly social-chauvinist majority of the Social Democratic Party and its centrist cover, provided by Karl Kautsky and Co.; they called for a new, revolutionary Third International; and hailed the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. These newsletters were known by the signature they came to bear, that of

SPARTACUS

Der Kasino der internationalen Lage.

**October 1918 issue of newsletter of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht's Spartakusbund.**

Spartacus—leader of the great slave revolt in ancient Rome. It was the popularity of these *Spartakusbriefe* (*Spartacist Letters*) that eventually gave the name of Spartakusbund (Spartacist League) to the group that initially formed around Luxemburg and Liebknecht in August 1914. All comrades today know that our forebears of the Revolutionary Tendency, expelled from the centrist Socialist Workers Party, honored this tradition in naming our press *Spartacist* in February-March 1964, and in taking the name of Spartacist League in September 1966. Less well known is that the name Spartacus first became an international symbol of the communist movement through the newsletters that began with Liebknecht's historic declaration of 2 December 1914.

Communist Greetings,
Victor G.

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*

The closing date for news in this issue is February 15

**No. 974** **18 February 2011**

**Spartacist League** **Black History Month Forums**

**150 Years Since the Civil War**

**Finish the Civil War!**

**For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

**NEW YORK CITY**
Saturday
February 19, 4 p.m.
322 W. 48th Street
1st Floor
(between 8th & 9th Aves.—Take A, C or E to 42nd St.)
For info: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

**LOS ANGELES**
Saturday
February 26, 4 p.m.
Mount Hollywood Congregational Church
4607 Prospect Ave.
(Vermont-Sunset Red Line Sta.)
For info: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

**BAY AREA**
Saturday
March 5, 2 p.m.
Methodist Church
303 Hudson St., Oakland
(5 blocks from Rockridge BART, enter on Manila)
For info: (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

**CHICAGO**

50 Years After SNCC and the Civil Rights Movement, Black Oppression Deepens–Still Separate, Still Unequal!

**The Fight for Black Freedom in Racist America**

**Saturday, February 26, 4 p.m.**

University of Illinois – Chicago; Student Center East, Rm. 605; 750 S. Halsted Street (Take Blue Line, UIC Halsted Stop); For info: (312) 563-0441; spartacist@iname.com

# Pandering to Reactionary Muslim Brotherhood

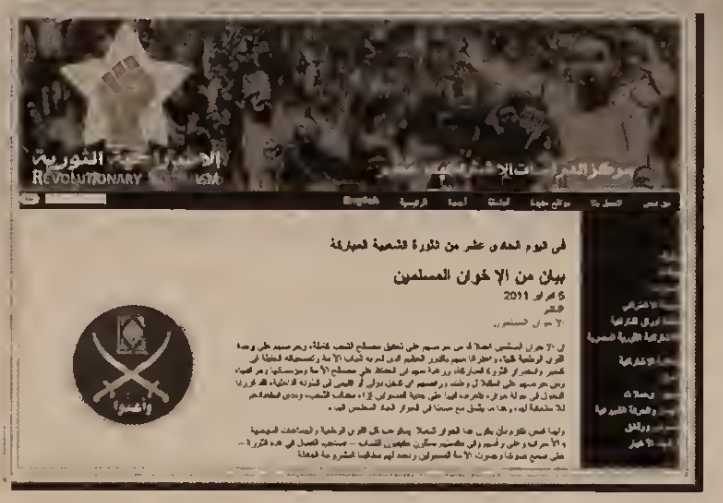
The ouster of Mubarak after years of dictatorship has lifted the lid on Egyptian society and its many contradictions. The tremendous mobilizations of unemployed youth, students, women and workers have created space for the left and working class to engage more openly in political activity—an opening that is directly threatened by the military takeover. At the same time, the upheaval has provided an opening for the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood, the country's largest opposition movement.

While many protesters say that they would oppose the Brotherhood coming to power, in the absence of a viable revolutionary proletarian alternative it could win a hearing among the desperate masses. This is not least because it provides clinics, schools, charities and other social services for slum dwellers that the bourgeois state fails to provide. A mass movement, the Brotherhood is heavily entrenched among professionals, students, peasants in rural areas and other petty-bourgeois layers as well as the lumpen-proletariat of the impoverished urban slums. In the last parliament, despite state repression and electoral rigging, the Brotherhood had 88 seats compared to the 34 seats for all other opposition parties combined.

Because of its historic hostility to workers struggles, the Brotherhood has not made significant inroads into the working class. But it has found allies in its attempt to win support among workers and youth. The opportunist Revolutionary Socialists (RS) group in Egypt—heavily promoted by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Britain, a section of the international tendency founded by the late Tony Cliff—has been fostering suicidal illusions in the Brotherhood. The RS tries to invest these obscurantist clerical forces with "anti-imperialist" credentials and has pursued alliances with them over several years. No one should be fooled by the Brotherhood's claim to fight against "all forms of injustice, tyranny, autocracy and dictatorship," as a statement of theirs published in the London *Guardian* (8 February) proclaims. Whether or not it is currently in any position to make a bid for power, the Muslim Brotherhood represents a deadly danger to the working class, the Coptic Christian minority, all secularists, gays and especially the brutally oppressed women of Egypt.

The RS is so fascinated by these reactionaries that it posted on its Web site a February 5 statement by the Brotherhood, complete with the Brotherhood's emblem of crossed swords. In a reminder of the criminal betrayal by the opportunist left internationally in the 1978-79 upheaval in Iran, when these groups supported the mullahs led by Ayatollah Khomeini, the RS today is championing anti-Semitic Islamic reaction in Egypt. Capitulation to Islamic forces or any other form of religious reaction is antithetical to secular humanism, not to mention the liberating goals of socialism.

## Cliffites on Egypt




**February 5 Muslim Brotherhood statement posted on Revolutionary Socialists organization Web site.**

In an article titled "Comrades and Brothers," published in *Middle East Report* (Spring 2007), Hossam El-Hamalawy, a self-described socialist journalist, boasts that the RS "pushed for close coordination" with the Brotherhood and praises its "brotherly spirit." The RS joined with the Brotherhood to form the National Alliance for Change in 2005, organizing joint demonstrations. El-Hamalawy notes: "The rapprochement between Islamists and the left continued when students from the Revolutionary Socialists' Tendency, Muslim Brothers and some independents formed the Free Student Union (FSU) in November 2005, with the aim of acting as a parallel organization to the government-dominated student unions."

The RS fatuously claims that the Brotherhood has "contradictions" that socialists can exploit. As our Canadian comrades wrote when the Cliffites used the same argument to support the introduction of *sharia* courts (!) in Canada, "The contradiction in religion lies in the fact that human beings created religions, only to have their creations rule over them like a Frankenstein monster. It is obscene to have to debate with ostensible Marxists whether clerical reaction should be supported. Marxists regard all modern religion as an instrument of bourgeois reaction that defends exploitation and befuddles the working people" (see "*Sharia* 'Socialists'," *WV* No. 861, 6 January 2006).

In March 2006, the RS issued a pamphlet by the Center for Socialist Studies, *The Muslim Brothers: A Socialist Perspective*. The pamphlet opens with a denunciation of the Egyptian Stalinists for characterizing the Brotherhood as "a political enemy of the left that must be fought at all levels." El-Hamalawy's 2007 article echoes this theme, stating: "Most independent leftist organizations in the 1980s and 1990s hewed to a line on political Islam similar to that of the Egyptian Communist Party," which translated into an alliance "with the Egyptian secular intelligentsia—and with Mubarak's regime."

Karim/Al Akhbar

**Left: Cliffite leader Chris Harman's 1994 paean to "anti-imperialist" Islamic reaction. Right: 1980 executions in Iran, as "revolutionary" Khomeini regime unleashed terror against workers, leftists, women, national minorities.**

We Marxists reject this bankrupt reformist framework, which posits that the only two "choices" for the working class in Egypt are to capitulate either to the "secular," military-backed bourgeois nationalist regime or to political Islam. In fact, these are ***alternative ways*** of propping up capitalist class rule, the system which ensures vast wealth for its rulers and dire poverty for the urban and rural masses. We look instead to the revolutionary mobilization of Egypt's proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed, in a fight for socialist revolution, which alone can address the fundamental problems facing the masses. We oppose the ban on the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists, which bolsters their credibility and also fosters illusions in the "secular" credentials of the bourgeois nationalists while buttressing the repressive powers of the capitalist state.

The RS's criticisms of the Stalinists for reliance on the state are a cover for its accommodation to the Muslim Brotherhood. For our part, we understand that bourgeois rule in semicolonial countries like Egypt, which groan under abject poverty and subjugation to imperialism, reinforces social backwardness and the hold of the Brotherhood and other reactionary religious forces.

### Muslim Brotherhood: A Reactionary Mass Movement

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, when there was widespread disappointment at the failure of the weak secular nationalist parties to secure Egypt's independence from British colonialism following the 1919 uprising. Under the slogan: "The Koran is our constitution," al-Banna preached a fundamentalist Islamism and aimed at establishing a theocratic state in Egypt. The organization rapidly grew, branching across the Islamic world from Algeria and Jordan to Pakistan.

The Brotherhood became a tool for the monarchy against its political opponents, sponsoring assassinations and mass violence against Communists and the bourgeois-nationalist Wafd party and providing shock troops to break workers strikes. After the army seized power in 1952, Gamal Abdel Nasser briefly embraced the Brotherhood before ruthlessly suppressing it. Anwar el-Sadat and Hosni Mubarak alternately repressed and demonized the Brotherhood or tolerated it. Sadat released Islamists jailed by Nasser and funded, armed and trained them as an effective antidote to Communists and other leftists. Emboldened by the state, Islamists turned university campuses into *terra islamica*. "They banned, clubs in hand, anything that fell foul of their norms," writes Gilles Kepel in *The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (1993). "Couples were physically attacked for violations of upright Islamic morals; films could not be shown; concerts and evening dances could not be held."

In 1992, fundamentalists shot dead Egyptian intellectual Farag Foda, a secular opponent of Islamic reaction. "The killing of Farag Foda was in fact the implementation of the punishment against an apostate which the imam [referring to the president] has failed to undertake," declared the government-sponsored religious body Al Azhar to justify this heinous crime. Renowned novelist Naguib Mahfouz, whose books were deemed "blasphemous" by fundamentalists, was stabbed in 1994, five years after a leading Islamic cleric had said he deserved to die. In 2000, Islamic fundamentalists ignited riots in Cairo in opposition to the publication of a novel that they considered "heretical" (see "Banquet for Seaweed," *WV* No. 770, 7 December 2001).

New York Review of Books

**1953: U.S. president Eisenhower meets in White House with group of Muslim delegates, seeking to build anti-Communist alliance during Cold War. Muslim Brotherhood leader Said Ramadan is second from right.**

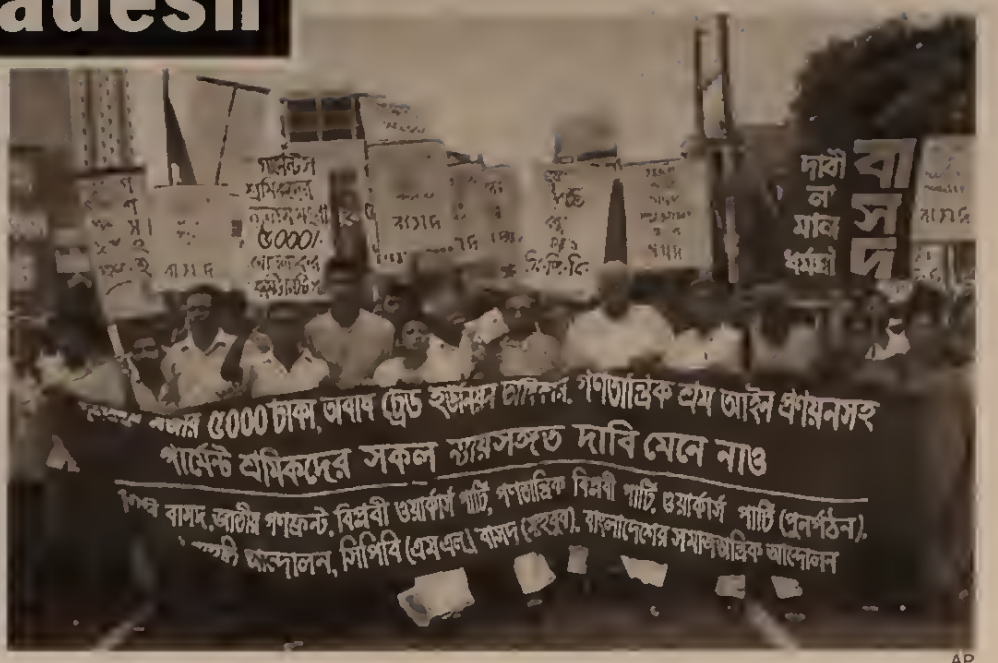
### From Iran to Afghanistan

The RS portrayed the Muslim Brotherhood as necessary allies in the struggle to bring down the Mubarak regime. The

*continued on page 5*

# Bangladesh

Reuters




AP

**Left: Police attack woman garment worker during protests in Dhaka, 30 June 2010. Right: Garment workers in Dhaka marching for rise in minimum wage hold banner reading, "Accept All the Just Demands of the Garment Workers," 28 July 2010.**

# Women Garment Workers Fight Starvation Wages

*The following article is reprinted from* Workers Hammer *No. 213 (Winter 2010-2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.*

On 12 December 2010, police in Chittagong, Bangladesh opened fire on garment workers protesting starvation wages, killing at least three. The killing occurred during several days in which tens of thousands of workers, who are mostly women, blocked roads near the capital, Dhaka, and besieged factories in the southern Export Processing Zone, protesting the refusal of factory owners to honour a wage increase agreed following an earlier round of class struggle last summer.

**WORKERS HAMMER**

Two days after the police killings, a fire in the Ha-Meem clothing factory in Ashulia near Dhaka killed between 26 and 31 workers and injured at least 100 more. That the exact number of dead in both the fire and the police killings is not clear speaks volumes about the value placed on workers' lives in this wretchedly impoverished South Asian country.

The ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh employs around 3.5 million workers and accounts for 80 per cent of the country's export earnings, some £7.7 billion [$12 billion] last year. It provides the country's second largest source of income after remittances from Bangladeshis working abroad, millions of whom are forced to toil in the most dangerous and lowest paid jobs in the Near East and Europe to support their families at home. Bangladesh's garment industry has grown dramatically over 25 years, supplanting the traditional exports of jute and tea, and consolidating a female proletarian layer with significant potential social power. Bangladesh's clothing factories supply major Western clothing brands, including Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Gap and Wal-Mart, while paying the lowest wages of garment workers in the world. The legal minimum wage won last summer (but not generally paid out by the factory bosses) is 3,000 taka [$42] a month, far below subsistence and coming in the context of sharp rises in food prices.

Garment factory fires like that in December—virtually mass murder by factory owners—are anything but rare. The Bangladesh *Daily Star* (27 February 2010) published a partial list of garment factory fires since 1990, including eight in which at least 20 died. In describing conditions typical of these atrocities, the International Labor Rights Forum wrote of a fire last year at the Garib & Garib Sweater Factory in Dhaka in which 21 workers died:

> "Lasting nearly two hours, the fire consumed the oxygen in the air, suffocating the workers. The smoke could not get out because the factory's windows were sealed with heavy metal shutters. Workers could not escape because exits were locked. Security personnel had reportedly locked two of the factory's main gates when the fire broke out to prevent theft by garment workers leaving the factory."
>
> — *Fighting Poverty Wages in Bangladesh* (SweatFree Communities, December 2010)

Recent years have seen explosive waves of labour protest and strikes by Bangladeshi garment workers who are engaged in a battle for survival in conditions of near-slavery, often forced to work more than 12-hour days, seven days a week to fill orders, in hazardous conditions. Trade unionists, even where allowed to function legally, are banned outright from organising in the factories, and are frequent targets of arrest, torture and killings by state forces. Odhikar, a Bangladeshi human rights organisation, documents at least seven garment workers killed in 2010 by government forces and 2,528 injured in the course of protests (odhikar.org, 1 January). They cite 259 arrests of workers' leaders in 2010 including garment workers' leader Mushrefa Mishu, who has been held in custody since the mid-December strikes and is seriously ill. Trade unions internationally must demand in solidarity: Free Mushrefa Mishu and all other detained worker activists!

Several trade unions internationally have issued statements of support for the embattled Bangladeshi workers. Workers Uniting, formed by trade unions including Unite in Britain and the United Steelworkers in the U.S. and Canada, took out a full-page advertisement in a Bangladeshi newspaper, the *Daily Ittefaq*, last July which was reproduced and mass distributed in Dhaka and Chittagong by the Textile Garment Workers Federation. It proclaimed: "Workers Uniting supports the very modest demand of Bangladesh's garment workers for a minimum wage of at least 5,000 taka [$71] a month." Derek Simpson, outgoing leader of Unite, condemned the global "race to the bottom" in sweatshop wages, saying that "these women in Bangladesh are having to work for as little pay as the employers can get away with."

Shahidul Alam/Drik

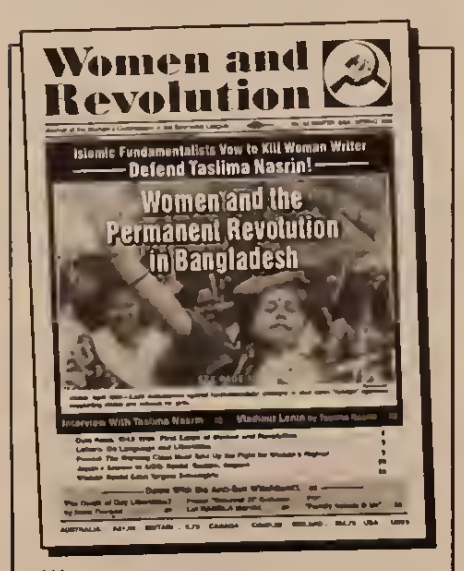
**Garment workers leader Mushrefa Mishu.**

Statements of international solidarity from the trade-union bureaucracies are a welcome change from protectionist campaigns against foreign workers such as when Simpson backed the wave of chauvinist strikes on Britain's building sites for "British jobs for British workers." Genuine proletarian internationalism, summed up in the *Communist Manifesto* slogan "workers of the world unite," is a call for unity in class struggle *against* the capitalist rulers in each country and is counterposed to the politics of the reformist trade-union bureaucracy which is loyal to its "own" bourgeoisie. Simpson's professed opposition to the "race to the bottom" in wages would ring hollow to Bangladeshi immigrant workers in Britain, who are among the poorest sections of the proletariat in the country. Far be it from the union bureaucracy to mobilise the social power of this powerful union in a class-struggle fight to defend jobs and wages against vicious capitalist austerity. By and large the union bureaucracy has supported the racist "war on terror" directed against Muslims which was launched under "their" Labour government.

The statements of solidarity with workers in Bangladesh by the trade-union bureaucracies include wretched appeals to their "own" capitalist rulers. The Workers Uniting statement pledges: "The AFL-CIO will ask our government to work together with the government of Bangladesh to guarantee that Bangladesh's workers have the right to freedom of association, to organise independent unions and to bargain collectively." In Britain, Unite backs the "Love Fashion Hate Sweatshops" campaign organised by War on Want which appeals to the British government to "regulate the business practices of UK retailers to ensure that overseas workers are guaranteed a living wage, decent working conditions and the right to join a trade union" (waronwant.org).

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are not workers organisations but are funded by capitalist governments, churches and business enterprises and appeals by the trade-union leaders to NGOs on behalf of the garment workers only serve to give a humanitarian gloss to imperialist exploitation in the world's poorest countries (while salving liberal consciences by promoting the mythical power of the consumers in the West). But the brutal capitalist exploitation that is endemic in the garment industry—from Bangladesh to the Philippines to Indonesia—will not be ended by appeals to the "good conscience" of the imperialist butchers in Britain and the U.S., but through class struggle that targets the profits of the manufacturing capitalists in every country.

The capitalists will do what they need to do in order to increase their profit margins—by intensifying exploitation of workers at home and/or by exporting their capital, thus moving jobs to countries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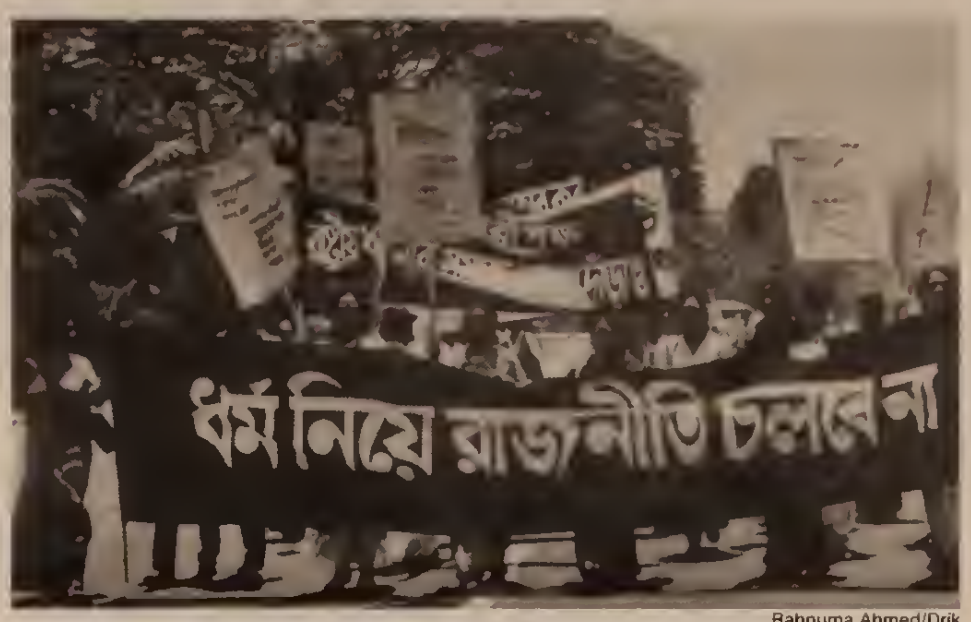
where labour costs are cheaper. In opposition to protectionism, the labour movement must fight for international working-class solidarity, linking the economic and other struggles of workers in the U.S. and Britain with those of workers around the world, particularly in Third World countries such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. What is ultimately necessary is the sweeping away of the global capitalist order through a series of socialist revolutions that establish an *international* planned economy.

### Women's Liberation and the Program of Permanent Revolution

For us revolutionary Marxists, the young women garment workers in Bangladesh are not mere victims in need of charity from the West, but are the backbone of a multi-billion pound industry that is vital to the economy of Bangladesh. Driven from the villages by desperate poverty, Bangladeshi women workers face brutal forms of exploitation, but they also stand to gain a new consciousness and for the first time in their lives participate in organised struggle against oppression as a class. In this hideously pour country that remains largely rural, the proletariat is small relative to the rest of the population but has tremenduus social power and is a crucial link in the chain of the world economy.

The venal ruling class of Bangladesh is tied to the imperialist powers by a thousand and one threads, not least to British imperialism, the former colonial power that exploited and dismembered the subcontinent. A WikiLeaks report in December revealed that British police forces, starting when Labour was in government, have been training the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion that is notorious for torture and killings of Bangladeshi workers' leaders, tribal activists, leftists and other political opponents of the government.

The horrific conditions of life in Bangladesh are a product not only of imperialist exploitation but of the tyranny of religious obscurantism. Whether under the Awami League, the Bangladesh National Party or military rule, Islamic strictures lead to brutish treatment of women who are secluded from social life and treated as chattel property of fathers and husbands. A job in the garment factories, however dangerous and poorly paid it may be, is one of the few socially acceptable ways for a woman to earn a living and to achieve a degree of independence. But to address the most basic democratic questions facing women workers in Bangladesh—who are subject to exploitation by employers, murderous state repression by the police, the danger of rape, as well as malnutrition for themselves and their children—requires a revolutionary socialist programme.



Rahnuma Ahmed/Drik
**Women's organizations protest government's declaration of Islam as state religion, 1988. Banner reads: "No to Playing Politics with Religion."**

In 1994 the courageous Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin was hounded out of the country by rabid Islamic fundamentalists incensed by her fight for the rights of women including to contraception and abortion. But the anti-woman hordes mobilised by the mullahs were not unopposed: in June 1994, 500 women garment workers in Dhaka armed with sticks mobilised in defence of Nasrin and against a strike call by fundamentalists, the aim of which was to pressure the government to arrest and execute Nasrin (see "Women and the Permanent Revolution in Bangladesh," *Women and Revolution* No. 44, Winter 1994-Spring 1995).

The emancipation of women as part of the liberation of the downtrodden of the entire subcontinent requires a struggle for *permanent revolution*—the perspective fought for by Lenin and Trotsky in the great October 1917 Revolution in Russia: the workers seizing power at the head of the oppressed masses, agrarian revolution to liberate the peasantry, the socialisation and rational reorganisation of the economy in the interests of human needs not profit, and the fight to extend socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist heartlands.■

# Cliffites...

*(continued from page 3)*

lesson to be drawn from subordinating the class interests of the toilers for the sake of maintaining an alliance with religious reactionaries has been written in blood by history. The International Communist League (then known as the international Spartacist tendency) warned from the outset of the 1978-79 Iranian upheaval that, absent a decisive break by the working class from the Islamic forces, the struggle would have a disastrous outcome.

In sharp contrast to the rest of the left's capitulation to mullah-led reaction, our program was summed up in the slogans: "Down with the Shah! No support to Khomeini! For workers revolution in Iran!" We warned that Khomeini in power would reimpose the veil, suppress national minorities and seek to crush the left and the workers movement as ruthlessly as did the Shah. Tragically, the Iranian masses paid the price. Khomeini's seizure and consolidation of power led to the execution of thousands of leftists, Kurds, women, homosexuals and opponents of theocratic rule in what was a historic defeat for the powerful Iranian proletariat.

During the renewed anti-Soviet Cold War of the 1980s, the U.S. imperialists massively armed and organized the Afghan *mujahedin* "holy warriors" against the Soviet Union, using as a pretext the 1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. We hailed the Red Army, whose intervention opened the way to the liberation of the Afghan peoples, especially the miserably oppressed women. We called to extend the gains of the 1917 October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. In the first war in modern history in which women's emancipation was a central issue, the Red Army battled the murderous imperialist-armed and -financed Islamic fundamentalists, who threw acid in the faces of unveiled women and killed schoolteachers who taught young girls to read (see "The Russian Question Point Blank," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 29, Summer 1980). We denounced the Kremlin Stalinists' 1989 withdrawal of Soviet troops as a betrayal of women and the oppressed Afghan peoples.

From their inception as a political tendency in Britain in the 1950s, the trademark of Tony Cliff and his followers was pro-imperialist anti-Sovietism, encapsulated in their slogan "Neither Washington nor Moscow." In Afghanistan in the 1980s, this merged with their tailing of Islamic fundamentalist forces. They lusted for the bloodying of the Soviet Army and prettified the *mujahedin* cutthroats as fighters against imperialism. The U.S. Cliffites of the International Socialist Organization declared: "Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988). The Soviet pullout was indeed the precursor to the final collapse of the USSR itself. And, to be sure, the Cliffites cheered the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state—a historic defeat not only for the peoples of the former Soviet Union but also for the international working class.

### Myth of Islamists' Anti-Imperialism

Keeping pace with the rise uf political Islam in the wake of counterrevulution in the Soviet Union, in 1994 the British SWP published a major article in *International Socialism* titled "The Prophet and the Proletariat" by the late Chris Harman, a leading Cliffite theoretician. Harman coined the opportunist slogan "With the Islamists sometimes, with the state never" and treated Islamic fundamentalist "mass movements" as radical petty-bourgeois nationalist formations which "have taken up anti-imperialist slogans and some anti-imperialist actions."

The notion that the Islamists are anti-imperialist flies in the face of history. During the Cold War, the American imperialists consciously sought to harness the deeply anti-Communist Islamic reactionaries as a force against the Soviet Union as well as secular nationalist regimes. In Egypt, Islamic reactionaries worked hand in hand with the imperialists and the Saudi monarchy to destabilize the pro-Moscow nationalist regime of Nasser. Muslim Brothers were put on the CIA payroll. And for the anti-Soviet operation in Afghanistan, the CIA's largest covert operation ever, the Brotherhood provided a major contingent of the *mujahedin*, led by Ayman al-Zawahiri, now a high-ranking leader of Al Qaeda. Today, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has made clear that U.S. imperialism can do business with the Brotherhood in post-Mubarak Egypt.

Tailing the Muslim Brotherhood today certainly does not prevent the Cliffites from keeping open the option of capitulating to "secular" Arab nationalism. An article in the British *Socialist Worker* (5 February) notes that "Nasser's brand of secular Arab nationalism still has many supporters inside Egypt" and eulogizes the bourgeois strongman Nasser as an anti-imperialist, writing: "As president between 1956 and 1970 he stood firm against imperialism and transformed Egypt."

Here the Cliffites are retailing the illusions in Nasser and the mythical "Arab Revolution" that the Stalinists fostered for decades. In reality, Nasser came to power largely with the aim of crushing the struggles of the combative working class. Neither the "secular" nationalism of Nasser nor Islamism can overcome the depredations of imperialism or provide solutions to any of the fundamental problems besetting the working class and oppressed in Egypt tuday. What's needed is a revolutionary workers party to lead the proletariat in a struggle for socialist revolution against the military bonapartists, the religious fundamentalists and all bourgeois political forces, opening the road to the emancipation of women and the liberation of all the oppressed and exploited.■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# France, May 1968

## Prerevolutionary Situation Betrayed by Communist Party

*We print below the second part of a forum given by our comrades of the Ligne Trotskyste de France, translated and adapted for publication from the LTF's newspaper* Le Bolchévik *(Nos. 185 and 186, September and December 2008). Part One, which appeared in* WV *No. 972 (21 January), focused on the period ending in mid May, when the general strike that had been sparked by the brutal repression of student protests spread throughout the country.*

LE BOLCHEVIK 4

By the end of May 1968, France was so paralyzed by the general strike that the bourgeoisie quickly decided to open negotiations, which took place at the employment ministry on the Rue de Grenelle in Paris. In 2008, the French Communist Party (PCF) issued a special edition of their newspaper *L'Humanité* about May '68. It included an interview with Georges Séguy, a PCF leader and secretary-general of the CGT trade-union federation in 1968, who said, "In the first ten minutes of the Grenelle meeting, we were able to raise the SMIC [minimum wage] by 35 percent, and the minimum wage for farm workers by 55 percent." Thus Séguy confirmed what Trotsky said in "Once Again, Whither France?" (March 1935): "The

*PART TWO*

general Marxist thesis 'Social reforms are only the by-products of the revolutionary struggle' has, in the epoch of the decline of capitalism, the most immediate and burning importance. The capitalists are able to cede *something* to the workers only if they are threatened with the danger of losing *everything*." In spite of the concessions that Séguy greatly exaggerated as "enormous," the CGT did not sign off on the negotiations but called to continue the strike. For several reasons.

The PCF, which led the CGT union federation, was perfectly aware that the working class was not ready to go back to work so easily, for so little, because the PCF and the CGT were present in most of the occupied factories. This detail shows how well the Stalinists knew their business: on day one of the occupation at the Renault plant in Billancourt, the most important factory in the country, the PCF sent a member of the Political Bureau, Claude Poperen, to stay in the plant to get a sense of the pulse of the working class. The PCF and the CGT had lots of experience betraying the workers—Benoît Frachon, a negotiator at Grenelle, had been a negotiator before, at the Matignon negotiations during the 1936 general strike. The PCF knew "how to end a strike," like in 1936 when they diverted the workers struggles into support for Léon Blum's popular-front government, which was an alliance between bourgeois and reformist socialist parties to manage capitalism. In 1968, without the prospect of a new popular-front government that would try to contain the workers' militancy and their hopes for change, it would have been very damaging for the PCF to call them back to work in exchange for such minimal concessions.

AFP

**24 May 1968: Workers from Citroën plant at Quai de Javel in Paris vote to continue strike.**

Another reason for the PCF to refuse to sign off on the agreement was that the rest of the left was increasingly maneuvering for a popular front without them. The PCF sought to use the Grenelle negotiations to pressure its putative partners to understand that, without the PCF, it would be impossible to find a "solution" to the strike that would serve the interests of the bourgeoisie.

French president Charles de Gaulle appeared on TV on May 24, calling for a referendum on unspecified reforms and threatening to resign if it failed. He intended this to be a referendum on his continued rule. His announcement flopped. Everybody knew the referendum would be boycotted or would fail. The question of power began to be posed more and more clearly. The Paris *préfet* (a regional official from the national government) at the time, Grimaud, tells in his book how some in de Gaulle's entourage raised the question of replacing de Gaulle. The bourgeoisie and the politicians saw that the government was tottering and looked for parliamentary and institutional answers, and accelerated their maneuvers.

During the Grenelle negotiations, which went on from May 25 to the morning of the 27th, the non-Communist left, with the enthusiastic support of pseudo-revolutionaries (the Pabloite Parti Communiste Internationaliste and Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, Voix Ouvrière [VO], and Pierre Lambert's Organisation Communiste Internationaliste), organized a rally in Charléty Stadium in Paris to which the PCF was not invited. Held on May 27, this gathering brought out tens of thousands of people. Pierre Mendès-France did not speak, but his presence was notable and noted, with part of the crowd chanting his name when he appeared. (Mendès-France was a bourgeois politician from the Radical Party who had won the leadership of the Parti Socialiste Unifié, a left social-democratic party. He was popular in 1968 because he was known for opposing the Algerian War.) On the morning of May 28, the left bourgeois politician François Mitterrand, who would later become leader of the Socialist Party, held a press conference in which he put himself forward as a candidate for the presidency—which he considered "vacant"—while holding open the door to Mendès-France for prime minister.

The Charléty maneuver enraged the PCF and CGT because they understood perfectly well what was up: the anti-Communist, pro-U.S. social democrats wanted to have their own popular-frontist solution without the PCF. The PCF had no intention of being taken for a ride. To make very clear that no one was getting around them, the PCF and CGT called for workers demonstrations on May 29. Politically, the PCF and CGT bureaucrats had a hold over their ranks, who accepted their perspective of a "people's government" (although they probably had a different interpretation of what it meant, especially since the CGT had committed to taking part in it). The front page of *L'Humanité* on the 29th, addressing the demonstrations, headlined "The Workers' Demand: A People's Government of Democratic Union with Communist Participation!" Which is very clear, to say the least.

The May 29 demonstrations were some of the largest during May-June '68. They had a dual purpose: to try to shake Gaullist power a little more, so de Gaulle would resign, and to convince the left that its response could only be parliamentary, but not without the PCF. As Séguy said in 1972: "With the regime seeming shaky to us, we really and very sincerely wanted to revive unity. But once again our proposal encountered nothing but widespread evasion on the part of those to whom it was addressed." In fact, the PCF attempted to work out a popular-front alliance in a meeting with the Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste on the afternoon of May 28, after Mitterrand's press conference. This came to nothing. During this meeting, Waldeck Rochet, the secretary-general of the PCF, asked, "Will there be any Communist ministers?", to which Mitterrand replied, "At least one." One can imagine how that sat with Waldeck Rochet.

AFP photos

**May 27 rally at Charléty Stadium in Paris, where part of crowd cheered capitalist politician Pierre Mendès-France (below center) as social democrats sought to build popular-front alliance without Communist Party.**

### What Should Revolutionaries Have Done?

In May 1968 we had no organization in France. But our American comrades wrote an article on the French May events in *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 12, September-October 1968, that has stood the test of time remarkably. We printed it in French in our 1988 pamphlet on May '68. In this pamphlet, retrospectively, we advocated a slogan for the month of May calling for a government of the PCF and the unions based on the strike committees. You have to

remember, in that period the workers were demonstrating behind the PCF's slogan for a "people's government," which they understood in a largely parliamentary framework. Calling for a PCF-union government would have been a means of transcending this parliamentary framework: how could the CGT union federation, how could the strike committees participate in a parliamentary government? This would have been a powerful perspective to put against the PCF's popular-front plans, in order to turn the PCF's base against its leadership by explaining that the PCF leaders were maneuvering for an alliance with the bourgeoisie instead of turning the strike committees into organs of workers power. The French Trotskyists put forward a similar slogan in 1946, for a government of the PCF, CGT and SFIO (the French Socialist party), in a terribly unstable situation when the PCF was participating in a popular-front government.

The question of turning the strike committees led by the bureaucrats into true embryos of workers power would have been key for a revolutionary party in May-June 1968. This would have made the question of the state central—that the state is not neutral but serves the interests of the bourgeoisie. The capitalist state is the cops, the army, the prison guards and the judges. Its job is to protect the tiny minority that owns the means of production against the vast majority—the proletarians, who have nothing to sell but their labor power, and all the oppressed. The main task of the government that administers the state, whether on the national or the municipal level, is to bring that power to bear in order to maintain the capitalist order.

So Séguy, while implicitly recognizing that the CGT and the PCF were in control and were deciding what would and would not happen in the country's economy, bent over backwards to get the workers to rely on the bourgeois state. The PCF directed the strike support committees I mentioned earlier, which organized food and other supplies, to the mayors' offices and put them under the mayors' authority, that is, under the authority of the capitalist state. (These were often PCF mayors, but not always.) The mayors are the representatives of the bourgeois state closest to the population, under the authority of the *préfet*. Hence our position of refusing to run for executive offices like mayor or president; we want the working class to learn that its ultimate goal must be to destroy the bourgeois state, not run it. (See "Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009.) Fostering the worst illusions among the working class, the PCF explicitly told workers not to organize and run society themselves.

Now, 40 years later, VO's successor Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and the Pabloites both spout the same reformist illusions that the PCF did in 1968, i.e., that the bourgeois state can serve the interests of the working class. While the PCF thinks this can be done by having lots of members in parliament, LO and the Pabloites want to use pressure from the masses to make the bourgeois state serve the workers. This sweeps into the trash one of the main lessons Marx and Engels drew from the revolutions of 1848 and especially the Paris Commune: the working class cannot confine itself to laying hold of the machinery of the bourgeois state, but must smash it.

## Strike Committees

Trotskyists would have fought for elected strike committees instead of committees appointed by the bureaucrats. We would have called for the strike committees to oversee the distribution of food and other supplies themselves, as well as resuming those services and utilities that the Stalinists wanted to turn over to the bourgeois state. By linking this to the Stalinists' attempt to come to an agreement with bourgeois parties and politicians, Trotskyists could have exploited the contradictions that existed in the PCF and CGT, setting the base against the top, showing workers who wanted to fight for socialism that their leadership's intent was not to achieve socialism, but to manage capitalism. So there would be a political struggle between a revolutionary perspective—that the working class has the power to run society for its own needs and to do that it must destroy the bourgeois state—and the opposing view of the reformists, who, at bottom, respect the capitalist order, private property and the bourgeois state.

Strike committees, workers councils and soviets are not revolutionary in themselves. Only a revolutionary leadership gives a revolutionary character to these organs of working-class power. Under the PCF's leadership, these committees looked to the bourgeois state, to the mayors' offices. Revolutionaries would have fought for them to have their own centralized organization, relying on the working class itself rather than organs of bourgeois power like the municipal governments. We would have sought to prepare workers politically, by every means available, to understand the need to act independently of all bourgeois forces, to organize workers militias to defend their positions, and to prepare to seize power and destroy the capitalist state.

It is easier to understand this point if you look at the situation in Russia in late July 1917, when the leaders of the soviets (the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries) were throwing Bolsheviks in jail. Lenin, who had fled to Finland to avoid arrest, thought that the workers should build new organs to move toward seizing power because he could see that, under the leadership of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, the soviets had tended to become a mere extension of hourgeois power. As it happened, the Bolsheviks subsequently won leadership of the soviets.

Revolutionaries' struggle needs to be based on a transitional program, leading the workers to the understanding that, in order to run society in their own interests, they have to be prepared to overthrow the bourgeois state. Trotsky explained in the Transitional Program (1938):

> "It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of ***transitional demands***, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

## Vital Questions: Immigrants, Women, Youth

Revolutionaries putting forward a transitional program in 1968 would have faced some other key questions: immigrants, women and youth. There were almost three million immigrants in France in 1968, mostly Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese and Algerians. Back then, there were a lot of young male workers, either single or with family still in the old country—practically none were second generation. They lived in terrible conditions, in flophouses or shantytowns (200 still existed at the time), working mainly in construction and in industries that employ metals. A total of 85 percent of immigrant workers had no job skills, and many professions were forbidden to them by law. There were about 500,000 immigrant workers in construction, 370,000 in industries employing metals and in steel, 260,000 in agriculture. Women were often cleaning ladies. The proportion of immigrants varied widely in different sectors of production.

Immigrants were generally not allowed to engage in political activity. They couldn't get elected as union reps without six to 24 months of seniority. Immigrant workers very often had work contracts lasting no longer than six months, which prevented them from ever being integrated in the unions. The Portuguese had spent 35 years under Salazar's dictatorship. If they engaged in political activity in France, they were deported and wound up in the prisons of Portugal or in Portuguese colonies in Africa. Dozens of Portuguese workers who played an active role in the May '68 strike disappeared afterward. Algerian workers were just coming off a victorious war of national liberation. They reportedly took a very active part in the strike from day one. Now they were fighting alongside French workers against the same capitalist class that had slaughtered their brothers during the Algerian War. To cement class unity, there should have been calls for *full citizenship rights for all who were in France*, with a fight for the same political and social rights that French workers had and to do away with all discrimination on the job, in housing and in education.

The bourgeoisie had been pitting various communities against each other for a very long time. But as May '68 unfolded, the divisions between the different ethnic sectors of the proletariat largely broke down. In construction in particular, immigrants were in the vanguard: French workers represented a labor aristocracy who didn't want to strike, whereas three-quarters of the unskilled workers were immigrants. Although the presence of the CGT or the PCF was often seen in this period as a protection against the worst manifestations of racism, with the PCF there actually was some chauvinism in May-June 1968. When strike support money was distributed, the Algerians had to fight to have their families back in Algeria taken into account.

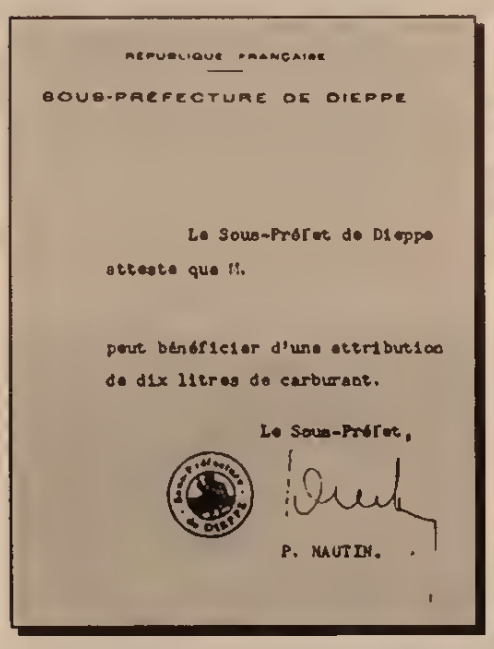
After May '68, deportations of immigrants took place (officially 215 through December 1968), especially of Spaniards (Spain was under Franco), and of Algerians known as opponents of Algerian ruler Houari Boumedienne. There were important protests against this, mainly taken up by liberal intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as Alain Krivine's Pabloites, although the immigrant question was not a significant part of their intervention into the events of May '68.

Ten years ago, when the left was running articles on the 30th anniversary of May '68, we wrote, "For all the 'Trotskyist' groups that have wasted paper spreading inanities about May '68 recently, *not one* even mentions the question of immigrant workers. But this question was already strategic, even at that time" (*Le Bolchévik* No. 147, Autumn 1998). And that's still true. On the 40th anniversary they still have nothing to say about immigrant workers. The conclusion we drew on that score in the 1998 article is also still valid: "The fact that the far left raised the immigrant question scarcely or not at all in May '68 represents a capitulation to social-chauvinism and its own bourgeoisie. In a country just emerging from a dirty colonial war [in Algeria] in which the reformist leaderships of the working class, under the cover of 'Republican values,' defended their own imperialism, this question was key to the proletarian unity needed to overthrow the bourgeoisie."

The working class as a whole must defend the rights of immigrants and minorities, otherwise it leaves itself open to being weakened, divided and set back under the bourgeoisie's attacks. The struggle against this division must be linked to the understanding that the overturn of capitalist society is the only means of doing away with racism once and for all.

The woman question was also central. Women represented a significant portion of the working class in 1968. There were about 1,800,000 women workers, constituting almost 22 percent of the working class. The vast majority of them were unskilled. In other words, they were at the bottom of the ladder, performing, like immigrant workers, many of the most arduous, unskilled and lowest-paid jobs. And they had very few rights. Abortion was totally illegal under a 1920 law. (Even

*continued on page 8*



RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

SOUS-PRÉFECTURE DE DIEPPE

Le Sous-Préfet de Dieppe

atteste que M.

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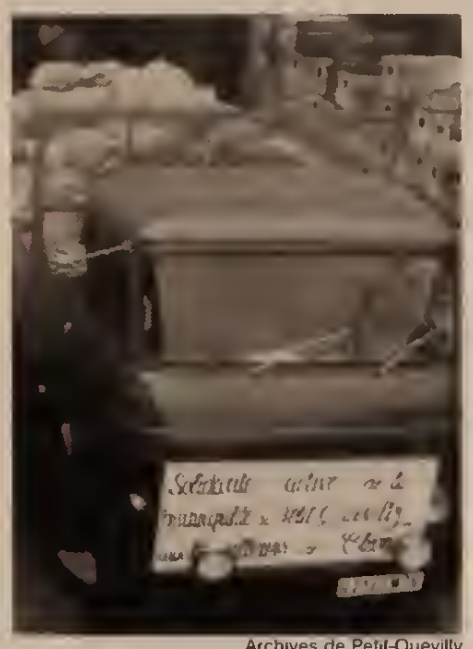
Le Sous-Préfet,

P. NAUTIN.



Archives de Petit-Quevilly

**Document from state official authorizing CGT union to distribute gas. Truck from Petit-Quevilly city government with food for striking workers. Communist Party, CGT tops tied strike committees to capitalist government.**

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# May 1968...

*(continued from page 7)*

today this right is limited by bourgeois morality, by all the difficulties immigrant women face and because of the "conscience clause" that doctors can invoke to refuse to perform abortions.) The ban on contraception had been lifted in 1967, but access to it remained very limited. The law forbidding a woman to even open a bank account without her husband's permission wasn't changed until 1965. The terms of divorce were very unfavorable for women and had not changed much since the Napoleonic Code. Questions of sexuality were completely taboo. Coeducation did not exist. In May '68, women workers overwhelmingly struck and occupied their factories.

A revolutionary party would have sought to address problems specific to women. It would also have fought in the working class as a whole against the bourgeois prejudices peddled by the workers' misleaders. In his recent book, *L'Insubordination Ouvrière dans les Années 68* [*Worker Insubordination in the '68 Years*], Xavier Vigna gives the example of the needle trades in Lorient, a port in Brittany, where the women of one factory got several neighboring factories to come out on strike and led a march to the CGT union local to take part in union activities. However, when it came to engaging in talks and negotiations, these were handled by a man who worked at the military shipyard. Vigna gives two examples of occupations (at the SNECMA aircraft plant in Gennevilliers and a clothing factory in Lille) where it was decided that the women would occupy the plant during the day and the men would do it at night. This was probably the case in most plants, reflecting the bourgeois family norm that women should be at home in the evening. In an interview in *L'Humanité*'s supplement on May '68, Gisèle Halimi, who became a founder of the Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (MLF, Women's Liberation Movement), tells how, full of hope for the cause of women, she ended up setting up chairs and cooking meals at the Censier campus.

In a prerevolutionary situation like 1968, the intervention of a revolutionary party would have had a resounding echo among women, including petty-bourgeois women. Calls for the right to abortion and contraception and "equal pay for equal work" would certainly have done a lot to win women over to the perspective for a socialist society and the need for workers revolution. At the same time, raising such demands in the many demonstrations and on the picket lines could have raised the consciousness of the working class as a whole by breaking out of the confines of strictly economic demands.

Archives of the City of Petit-Quevilly

**Workers gather outside factory during upheaval. Gains for women, including right to abortion, were a by-product of the struggles of May 1968.**

A revolutionary party would have explained how women's oppression stems from private ownership of the means of production. Marx and Engels identified the family as the principal source of women's oppression because of its role in the inheritance of property, in particular of the means of production. Sexual monogamy on the part of women—as well as their social subordination—is required in order to determine without douht the paternity of the heir. We say that the social institution of the family must be replaced (that differentiates us from bourgeois feminists). This can be accomplished only after a socialist revolution, as a planned economy will free men and women from domestic chores with 24/7 day care, quality collective laundries and dining, etc.

Just as with the immigrant question, it's appalling to see how absent this question is from the propaganda put out by the left in 1968, although women's oppression at the time was egregious and women had a massive presence in the strikes. This left the road open for bourgeois feminists, who went on to found the MLF in 1970. A lot of the women who ended up in the MLF after 1968 could probably have been won to the only program that can really lead to women's liberation: socialist revolution. Once the MLF was created, pseudo-revolutionaries like the Pabloites would "discover" the woman question and start tailing the bourgeois feminist movement.

Students were the spark that lit the fire. Among workers, it was often the younger ones, both men and women, who spearheaded strikes and occupations. The family is the basis not only for women's oppression, but also for the oppression of youth. And the Gaullist regime was very hardline and moralistic about "family values." Questions of sex were taboo in Gaullist society, as I said hefore—there was no coeducation and homosexuals had no rights. Minors who wanted birth control still had to get their parents' permission. Young people were subject to parental authority and had very few rights. There was mandatory 16-month military service. Any propaganda against the bourgeois army and the draft would have had a lot of impact, especially when de Gaulle was contemplating turning to the army to crush the working class.

A revolutionary party would have sought to win student youth to join the cause of the proletariat, the only force capable of ending all forms of oppression. By building a revolutionary youth organization independent of the party but sharing the same program, it would have been possible to recruit youth, the flame of the proletarian revolution.

To wrap up my remarks about intervening on these pivotal questions I'll quote the Transitional Program, which explains:

> "Opportunist organizations by their very nature concentrate their chief attention on the top layers of the working class and therefore ignore both the youth and the women workers. The decay of capitalism, however, deals its heaviest blows to the woman as a wage earner and as a housewife. The sections of the Fourth International should seek hases of support among the most exploited layers of the working class; consequently, among the women workers. Here they will find inexhaustible stores of devotion, selflessness and readiness to sacrifice."

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Jean-Pierre Rey

**Banner from Turgot High School at May 13 rally in Paris. Youth rebelled against oppressive climate of Gaullist France.**

# *Letters to* Young Spartacus

## On Obama's War on Public Education

January 19, 2011

Dear WV Editor,

I found the article in WV #967 "Obama's War on Public Education" did a very good job of covering in-depth the attack that "education reform" represents both for poor and working class, mainly black, youth and the teachers that teach them. One point that I would make more strongly is that charter schools often use their special status not only to attack teachers unions and racial integration, but also as a way to increase the level of repression on students. Since these schools are not publicly run all decisions regarding code of discipline, student and teacher speech, dress code, length of school day, etc. are decided privately; as there is no publicly elected school board. Granted that the oppression of students can be done through the normal channels of the "democratic" public school system, but charter schools help to speed up this process.

Comradely,
Ken

* * *

22 January 2011

Hi,

I have some issues with the article "Obama's war on public education" in WV #967 which is an otherwise exemplary piece of propaganda. The article nceded to discuss the woman question and the nuclear family, the primary means of oppressing women. The woman question is especially important when discussing the black question. Also, the plight of immigrants is mentioned in the article along with the defense of bilingual education, but not the SL's other demands defending immigrants.

This article does not mention that women are specially oppressed or explicitly call for woman's liberation: Can you give a (working class) sister a break? The bourgeois propaganda, laws, and actual functioning institutions around schools and youth are heavily parent/family orientated. However, the only reference to woman's oppression in the article is with regard to sexual discrimination.

Schools are race, class AND sex biased. The ruling class "answer" to struggling mostly female run households is to use the law against the male parents to pay alimony. Also, both conservatives and many moralistic black liberals blame the single parent (read female) run households for the lack of advancements of the kids in these households. This cries out for free 24-hour childcare and free abortion on demand.

The 24-hour childcare and free abortion demands should always accompany the demands for open admissions, etc. as it's hard to go to school, especially as a teen, when you have kids. I would also add free abortion on demand and contraception to calls for free quality health care as well. Another point that could have been mentioned is that teaching abstinence, the lack or inadequacy of sex education, the lack of birth control at most schools, and lack of free abortions on demand makes teens have unplanned children.

Talking about the nuclear family as the primary means of oppressing women as well as the prime focus of capitalist education is on the nuclear family, etc. would be more effective propaganda. Doesn't most religious obscurantism teach the subservience of women?

To illustrate the peculiarity of U.S. education and religious obscurantism, the public Ohlone Community College in Fremont (25 mi. South of Oakland), California requires students to pay a fee for health insurance. This is an extremely limited insurance which protects you if you get injured on campus only. The college will, however, waive the fee for students who use prayer to heal themselves! In revolutionary Russia militant atheism was taught in the schools.

Some other needed demands which were laws in the Soviet Union are paid leave for child rearing and getting one's job back guaranteed. The fact that schools have a heavily woman workforce brings up the woman question which these workers face. Teaching is a job which requires

# Capitalism Has Nothing to Offer Youth

## SYC Speech at New York Holiday Appeal

*On January 21, the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, held its 25th annual Holiday Appeal benefit for class-war prisoners in New York City. A Spartacus Youth Club member gave the following speech, which has been slightly edited for publication.*

It is important for revolutionary youth to take up the cause of the class-war prisoners because, as the old Industrial Workers of the World saying goes, "They are in there for us and we are out here for them." Even if we do not share the same politics, we stand on the same side of the class line. If the working class is to move forward, it is essential that we defend our class brothers and sisters.

Around the world, the capitalists' attempts to make the working class pay for the bosses' recession have come down on youth especially hard. In the U.S., 43.8 percent of black teens are now unemployed as well as 23.5 percent of white teens.

Obama continues his frontal assault on education, seeking to smash the teachers unions and privatize schools through the charter school movement. Higher education is becoming even more unreachable as capitalist governments from New York to London to Puerto Rico are raising tuition rates as part of broader "austerity measures," i.e., attacks on the working class as a whole.

The capitalist class continues to uphold the bourgeois family, meaning one man on one woman for life. Maintaining this family structure requires the brutal repression of women and youth, as we saw in the case of Tyler Clementi, the Rutgers student who jumped off the nearby George Washington Bridge rather than face the torment of being a young gay man in America. Just weeks later, two young men in the Bronx were savagely beaten because they were suspected of being a couple.

Add to this the racist war on drugs, which continues to target black and minority youth. According to the *New York Times* one out of every nine black men between 20 and 34 is currently behind bars or on parole. The majority of these cases involve "drug-related offenses."

Perhaps nothing explodes the "end of racism" myth more graphically than the fact that the police continue to gun down black and Latino youth no less under Obama than under any other administration. Witness Angel Alvarez and Luis Soto, who were shot down by the cops just blocks away from here. It is clear that capitalism has nothing to offer youth today. It is a brutal, exploitative and decaying system that must be completely uprooted and overthrown.

If we are to succeed, the youth must learn that the struggle to put an end to racism, sexism, starvation, exploitation, imperialist war, rampant disease and mass imprisonment is a *class struggle*. It is the struggle of the workers, who seek better wages, benefits, equality, etc., against the capitalists, who seek to squeeze every last ounce of profit out of the skins of the workers.

Hand in hand with this understanding comes the realization that if students want to put an end to capitalism, they cannot do it alone. They must be allied with the working class, because only the working class has the power to shut down production and bring the whole capitalist system to a grinding halt. Right now, the students at the Río Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico are on strike against a tuition hike. The students are maintaining their strike in spite of violent repression from the cops and private security guards. The student action is courageous; however, the success of the student strike will hinge on whether or not it is joined by the workers. It was only through the *united* action of the students and workers that the campus strike last spring was victorious.

These struggles are not new by any means! And just as capitalist repression has a long and bloody history, the working-class struggle to abolish oppression has a long and powerful history as well! The high point of this was the Russian Revolution, when the working class, under the leadership of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, actually ripped state power out of the hands of the capitalists and established the first *workers* state in the history of the world.

It is important for revolutionary youth to remember that we are not alone! We are not the first people who have felt this way! Others started this fight long before we were born, and it is up to us to continue it in the future and bring the class struggle to its victorious conclusion.

It is also essential that the youth internalize the lessons that previous generations have learned in the class struggle. Central to these lessons is that the capitalists' courts are *never neutral*. They are the exclusive instrument of the capitalist state, whose interests are *diametrically opposed* to the interests of the workers. From this understanding springs the slogan: *There is no justice in the capitalist courts!* If you are looking for proof of this slogan, look no further than the cases of the class-war prisoners. These courageous men and women are living the reality of this slogan every day.

Our class understanding of the state and its courts sets us apart from the rest of the left. A good example of this was seen last semester at CCNY, the college just across the street. The International Socialist Organization, or ISO, held a video showing of a new documentary about death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The ISO is in a campaign to pressure Obama to start a civil rights investigation into Mumia's case. The Spartacus Youth Club was able to intervene at this event and point out, among other things, that Obama is the class enemy! He is the top cop of the capitalist state, whose job it is to maintain the racist capitalist system, which means getting rid of people who are perceived as threats to the capitalist order, like Mumia. When I asked the ISOers why they thought that Obama, who is *explicitly* pro-death penalty, would lift a finger to free Mumia, the ISO had no response.

Reformists like the ISO see the injustices against Mumia and the other class-war prisoners as an embarrassment to the capitalist state. They seek to build illusions in the capitalist courts and attempt to appeal to the capitalist rulers' imaginary sense of justice. We know that the capitalists want anything but justice for the working class. While we support the pursuit of all legal means to free Mumia and all the class-war prisoners, we understand that ultimately it is only the working class who has the power to free them from the capitalists' death grip.

Our class perspective also informs our position on military recruiters on campus. We have always opposed the recruiters because we understand the U.S. Army to be the tool of imperialist domination. This is why we protested their presence last semester at CCNY, and our relatively small team of demonstrators found considerable support among the other students. Liberals, however, have in recent years based their opposition to recruiters on the fact that the U.S. military discriminated against homosexuals, not because it is a tool for mass murder and imperialist plunder. These same liberals will find themselves ideologically disarmed this next semester, as the U.S. military is now an "equal opportunity employer." While we always opposed "don't ask, don't tell" as part of our defense of basic democratic rights for homosexuals, it was never the basis of our unconditional opposition to the imperialist military.

As Marxists we understand that social struggle is inevitable. Witness the widespread outrage in Tunisia, or in Europe at the recent round of "austerity measures." In London, students took to the streets by the tens of thousands to protest the *tripling* of their tuition. At the same time as the British ruling class is engaged in the largest attacks on the working class in years, Prince William and Kate Middleton are enjoying a rather different type of engagement, busy with the preparations of their outlandish royal wedding. Camilla and Prince Charles drove into one of these student demonstrations. When the students found out who was in the car, they surrounded the vehicle shouting, "Off with their heads!"

Class struggle is inevitable. What is not inevitable is who will win. For the working class to seize power from the hands of its oppressors and hold on to it requires the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. As an older comrade said to me, "Marxism does not hover above the earth as a separate entity in space. Marxism exists only in human beings."

And that is why, if you feel the way we do, if you understand that capitalism needs to be overthrown, if you want to fight for the emancipation of these prisoners and the emancipation of all of humanity, then join us in the struggle to overthrow this racist, sexist, bloody, oppressive capitalist system once and for all! *Free the class-war prisoners! No illusions in the capitalist courts! Onward to a socialist future!* ■

Young Spartacus

**Spartacus Youth Club at October 2010 Oakland rally for Oscar Grant, young black man killed by cops in 2009.**

a bachelors degree and special training yet is paid less than comparable male dominated jobs with similar requirements.

Given the historic sexism amongst blacks even among black militant groups, sexism needed to be in the article. Let's not forget the "Million MAN (emphasis added) March." There is also "machismo" among Latinos and "macho" blacks. Especially black women workers face triple oppression. This has been mentioned in other articles but not this one.

The article mentions a fight against the wretched conditions in which "families live in fear of immigration raids...," yet does not call for full citizenship rights. I've seen some of the European ICL-FI sections say that immigrants are a specially oppressed group. This is true everywhere. The undocumented are super exploited with wages below minimum wage. Also, the threat of deportation is significant and only faced by these workers.

As one rapper said, most Americans believe that Central America is somewhere near Kansas. The U.S. needs a massive literacy and general education program for adults as has been done after the October, Cuban, and other anti-capitalist revolutions. A healthy workers' state needs informed inhabitants.

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# A Marxist Analysis of the Mexican Revolution of 1910

*This part concludes this article, translated from* Espartaco *No. 12 (Spring-Summer 1999), published by the Grupo Espartaquista de México. Part One appeared in* WV *No. 973 (4 February).*

**ESPARTACO**

When the Mexican Revolution broke out, the proletariat consisted of some 600,000 workers but was very dispersed and atomized throughout the country, particularly in the mines, on the railroads, in the textile industry and various artisanal trades. The list of organizations affiliated with the Casa del Obrero Mundial [House of the World Worker], founded only in September 1912, shows the still-rudimentary composition of the proletariat. Besides electricians and streetcar drivers, the majority of the list consisted of guilds such as bakers, drivers, tailors, leather workers, bricklayers, shoemakers, carpenters, etc. There was also some urban industry, such as textiles, but not nearly as modern or concentrated as in western Russia. Also, because of the limited migration of European workers, socialist thought was not as widespread here as in Chile and Argentina in the Southern Cone of the hemisphere.

Consequently, anarchism (imported from Spain) flourished and gained authority in the young working class. The anarchism of the Flores Magón brothers had emerged as a radical-liberal tendency in the ranks of the bourgeois opposition to

Brown Brothers

**Río Blanco textile workers during 1908 strike organized by anarchist Flores Magón brothers.**

## *PART TWO*

Porfirio Díaz. During the Porfirian dictatorship, anarchist publications such as *El Hijo del Ahuizote* [*Son of the Scourge*], *Revolución* and *Regeneración* helped to organize sectors of society unhappy with the regime. From 1906 to the 1910 uprising led by Francisco Madero, the anarchists focused their strategy on the formation of guerrilla cells in the north. They even established a utopian anarchist "Socialist Republic of Baja California" in 1911, which was immediately crushed after an agreement between Díaz and Madero was reached. Díaz's constant repression of Ricardo Flores Magón's group, which eventually had to hide in the U.S., pushed the group to the left, and it began to build workers' cells. During the Revolution, anarchist groups founded the Casa del Obrero Mundial.

Flores Magón and his Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) certainly presented the most radical program during the Revolution, even calling for the abolition of private property and for no support for the bourgeoisie. But its ideas and proclamations were extremely contradictory. In spite of its influence on the incipient unions, Magonist anarchism did not represent the historic interests of the working class; it had more to do with a type of petty-bourgeois "utopian socialism" that reflected the desperation of the artisans and the middle classes ruined under the Porfiriato.

The acid test of the Mexican Revolution showed the total bankruptcy of anarchism and its inability to draw an independent class line. Some anarchists in the Casa del Obrero (such as Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama) went over to the ranks of Zapatismo. But the majority of the anarchist leaders, such as Antonio I. Villarreal, who went from the ranks of the PLM to being governor of [the northern state of] Nuevo León and a mouthpiece for the bourgeois forces of Venustiano Carranza, reached agreement with Carranza and engaged in demagoguery to convince a sector of the working class to participate in Carranza's infamous "red battalions" [armed forces arrayed against peasant insurgents].

The traitorous collaboration of the Casa del Obrero anarchists, who exchanged their "direct action" discourse for the demagogic "class struggle" offered by Carranza in his 1913 Plan de Guadalupe, guaranteed "social peace" in the capital for Alvaro Obregón while he pursued Pancho Villa. In the end, the Casa del Obrero leadership accepted without complaint Obregón's order to dissolve their organization when it was no longer useful to him. Most of these anarchists would later have careers as union bureaucrats in the new Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM, Mexican Regional Workers Confederation), subservient to the bourgeois regime.

Here it is interesting to refer to the position of the centrist Internationalist Group (IG), a handful of deserters from Trotskyism who were expelled from our organization in 1996. The IG attempts a retrospective embellishment of the anti-revolutionary role of anarchism which, inciting the backward consciousness of the working class, mobilized it to *actively* support the suppression of the revolution under the Carranza's orders. The IG writes:

> "The anarchists withdrew into passive opposition to all sides. General Obregón, meanwhile, wooed the Casa del Obrero on behalf of the mistrusted landowner-general Carranza.... When Obregón appealed for the formation of Red Battalions of workers to fight Villa, the union bureaucrats finally agreed (despite continued opposition in the ranks)."
>
> —*The Internationalist*, April-May 1997

In the IG's centrist laundry room, the anarchist bureaucrats of the Casa del Obrero seem like confused, passive victims of Obregón's intrigues. The IG uses the same lying description of "paralyzed" victims that [IG leader Jan] Norden used to clean up the image of the Stalinists of the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany), who in 1990 led the counterrevolution and presented the East German workers state as a gift to imperialism.

As we have written, anarchism showed its complete bankruptcy during the Mexican Revolution. With their petty-bourgeois perspective, the pages of *Regeneración* and Magón's correspondence were filled with bitter recriminations against the working class for being responsible for its destiny. Magón wrote to Gus Teltsch in 1921: "Man is a very stupid animal...as long as he has a crust of stale bread to put in his mouth, he thinks he lives in the best world, and everything is going well." Years earlier, Magón even celebrated with strange justifications the imperialist slaughter of the First World War:

> "Millions of men dead? Even better! The people are such imbeciles that they need these terrible blows, these formidable shocks, to wake up. Let us not give in to whining and sentimentality in the face of this spectacle of desolation and ruin. Let us accept with fortitude this result of human stupidity, and to those who wish to hear us, let us say: Brothers, here is the result of your obstinate refusal to heed our good counsel.... Long live the war! Let the horrible spectacle of death, the desolation, the hunger, the ruin, shock the peoples who are lethargic with the narcotic of flags, fatherlands and religions!"
>
> —*Regeneración* No. 201 (undated)

Even earlier, the anarchist PLM went so far as to define a chauvinist, anti-immigrant, protectionist vision in its program. Regarding Chinese workers, the 1906 PLM Program stated: "Generally willing to work for the lowest pay, submissive, with paltry aspirations, the Chinese is a great obstacle to the prosperity of other workers. His competition is disastrous and we must avoid it in Mexico."

It was Villa and the northern governors who took anti-Chinese chauvinism to its ultimate consequences. One can see this brutal aspect of the Villista troops in Friedrich Katz's well-documented biography *Pancho Villa*, in which the historian exposes the visceral hostility of the Villistas toward Chinese immigrants, whom they plundered and murdered in the cities Villa's forces occupied. The anti-Chinese chauvinist poison went hand in hand with the moth-eaten anti-Semitism propagated in Mexico since the Inquisition. It is no accident that today's "Chinatown" in Mexico City occupies only half a block of Dolores Street.

The lack of an authentic revolutionary internationalist leadership during the Mexican Revolution would be felt again when the working class began to radicalize against Carranza, as demonstrated by an electricians general strike in Mexico City in 1916. One can understand the limited anarcho-liberal vision of Magón and many of its unresolvable contradictions, which led him to sordid extremes like the anti-Chinese chauvinism of his party. But it is pathetic that today reformist groups like the Partido Obrero Socialista (POS, Socialist Workers Party), heirs of the political chameleon Nahuel Moreno, and the Liga de Unidad Socialista (LUS, League of Socialist Unity), heirs of the pseudo-Trotskyist Ernest Mandel, which along with others promote nationalism, venerate Flores Magón and refer to him uncritically as a "fighter for the liberation of the proletariat" (*El Socialista-Umbral* No. 238, 1 May 1998).

Hemeroteca Nacional

**Representatives of anarchist-led Casa del Obrero Mundial meeting with Venustiano Carranza (center), who as Mexico's president issued 1913 "Plan de Guadelupe" in bid to guarantee social peace.**

### The Petty-Bourgeois Vision of the Nationalist Left

The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 is a clear example of one of those revolutions in which the proletariat, still socially weak, was incapable of acting as an independent contender for power and carrying out its revolutionary tasks. Generalizing from the experience of the Chinese proletariat's bloody defeat, thanks to Stalin's betrayal, in the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927 at the hands of the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang of Chiang Kai-shek, Leon Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

> "Under the conditions of the imperialist epoch, the national democratic revolution can be carried through to a victorious end only when the social and political relationships of the country are

mature for putting the proletariat in power as the leader of the masses of the people. And if this is not yet the case? Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses."

Later, he continued:

"A backward colonial or semi-colonial country, the proletariat of which is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and take power, is thereby incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion."

As subsequent history would show, what Trotsky wrote is completely applicable to the Mexican Revolution, whose results were partial and "*directed entirely against the working masses*." This can be seen from the beginning in the Zapatista demand that "the land belong to the tiller"—a demand for which hundreds of thousands of peasants rose in rebellion and died. The land was completely stolen by the victorious bourgeois faction: almost all the land seized in the revolution was returned to the landowners or appropriated by elements of the new military caste. (Such a return of lands to the owners of the landed estates did not occur, for example, in France under Napoleon after the Great French Revolution, nor even under the restorationist monarchists that succeeded him.)

Besides the key agrarian question that the Mexican Revolution failed to resolve, there is the issue of imperialism and national liberation, which could not be resolved under bourgeois leadership, or under peasant leadership for that matter. The United States was able to increase its control over the Mexican economy, and the shackles of imperialism continued to tighten on the country, giving rise to the present situation.

With the bloody triumph of Carranza and Obregón's bourgeois wing, ferocious repression was unleashed in the cities. Not surprisingly, many workers and anarchist leaders of the "red battalions" who returned from fighting the peasant armies were shot as soon as they began to demand that Carranza's promises be kept. The old death penalty, which had been decreed in 1862, was restored along with other brutal punishments to be applied against the workers movement. A common practice of this new regime was to first send the army against strike picket lines and then, after carrying out repression, to concede a few of the workers' demands...over their leaders' corpses. This type of political practice, directed entirely against the working class, as Trotsky wrote, was crystallized in the famous Carrancista Constitution of 1917, which gives the bourgeois state the role of inspector and supreme arbiter in the life of the unions.

To achieve its consolidation, the bourgeois regime of Carranza's successor Obregón, which had support among the petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals, began to use nationalism and an opportunistic anticlericalism as ideological battering rams in order to justify its continuing repression of workers struggles and regional uprisings of land-hungry peasants. In 1938, the nationalist regime of General Lázaro Cárdenas decreed the expropriation of the petroleum industry and carried out some land distribution, mainly as an escape valve for the pressure of peasant unrest that had been set loose by the church in the reactionary clerical Cristero movement. Cárdenas also used the land distribution as a way to deactivate workers struggles, offering pieces of land so that dissatisfied workers could become small peasant landowners.

Agustin Victor Casasola

Hulton

**Left: Peasant guerrillas, 1914. Right: Pancho Villa, in presidential chair, with Emiliano Zapata in 1915 after their peasant forces seized Mexico City.**

With these measures and because of his occasional friction with imperialism, Lázaro Cárdenas gained popularity with the masses and gave a strong boost to nationalism. The Cárdenas regime was able to subordinate the most important workers unions to the PRM (predecessor of the PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party). This was thanks to the treason of the Stalinist Mexican Communist Party (PCM, founded in 1919), which, following the traitorous, class-collaborationist line of Stalin's popular front, used its influence in the unions to support [the reformist] Lombardo Toledano and [quintessential pro-government bureaucrat] Fidel Velázquez. Thereafter, the leadership of these unions fell into the hands of the corporatist "charro" bureaucracy—labor lieutenants of capital and the bourgeois state in the workers movement. While opening schools and initiating some public works projects, Lázaro Cárdenas reinforced the army and also founded the hated anti-riot squad known as the "granaderos," the fundamental instrument of the bourgeoisie for breaking strikes and beating students.

Library of Congress

**Political execution during Mexican Revolution.**

The reformist left failed to resist the increasing popularity of the *caudillo* Cárdenas and capitulated to the nationalism that was in vogue. This had its most well-known intellectual expression in the works of José Revueltas, a dissident member of the Stalinist PCM, and, later, those of the onetime pseudo-Trotskyist Adolfo Gilly. Influenced by the Stalinist schema of "revolution in stages" and "socialism in one country" and adding his own special philosophical gibberish, Revueltas extolled the terrible backwardness in the Mexican countryside in order to paint the economy during the Porfiriato as merely "semi-feudal." He then characterized the Revolution of 1910 as a successful bourgeois-democratic "anti-feudal" revolution, which is false.

In the imperialist epoch of capital, as we have noted, it is impossible for the national bourgeoisie to carry a democratic revolution to victory and solve such burning issues as the agrarian question. The millions of landless peasants, including indigenous people, throughout the country are the strongest possible refutation of the Stalinoid vision of Revueltas, who embellished the meager achievements of the Mexican Revolution.

Underwood and Underwood

**U.S. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson, shown riding through Mexico City, supported 1913 overthrow of liberal president Francisco Madero.**

Inspired by the Stalinist concept, Revueltas feverishly looked for a "progressive" sector of the bourgeoisie, which he claimed to have found in Carranza's forces. In his 1962 essay "Un Proletariado Sin Cabeza" ("A Proletariat Without a Head"), in which he supposedly differentiates himself from the PCM, Revueltas writes a defense of Carranza:

> "Thus, *carrancismo* is actually more radical, more 'advanced' than *maderismo*, because the bourgeois-democratic ideology must widen its field of criticism.... Not only does Carranza promise from the beginning to establish a new organic legal statute for the country, but he also announces the beginning of the social revolution."

Revueltas' anti-Marxist revisionism is accompanied by his position on the role of the working class:

> "Even when the proletariat does not carry out a leadership function in a bourgeois-democratic revolution like that of 1910, on its own, solely by its presence, it provokes a series of historical and revolutionary consequences. There is an immanent force in the proletariat that on its own becomes evident and leads to results within history.
>
> "This occurred with the proletariat in the Revolution of 1910. And if this bourgeois-democratic revolution has such an advanced and progressive character, it owes this more than anything else to the working class."
>
> —José Revueltas, "La Revolución Mexicana y el Proletariado" ("The Mexican Revolution and the Proletariat"), 1938

This "objectivist" vision of the weight and role of the working class is typical of the revisionist current of Michel Pablo, which developed in the ranks of the Fourth International in the 1950s. (Perhaps that was why, at the end of his life, Revueltas considered joining the Pabloite United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel.) Trotsky polemicized strongly against the false position that the proletariat could effect revolutionary changes "solely by its presence" or its combativity. Trotsky affirmed that the fundamental condition for the proletariat to intervene as a revolutionary force is that it has the consciousness of its historical tasks and a communist leadership. Revueltas was hostile to this Marxist-Leninist perspective.

The Stalinist position of seeking a non-existent "progressive" sector of the bourgeoisie, and its vision of the proletariat as a mass whose weight is revolutionary in and of itself, was consistent with the type of party that Revueltas wanted to build: not a Leninist vanguard party but rather an amorphous party of "the whole class." In fact, the core of Revueltas' critique of the Stalinist PCM was to reproach it for not having succeeded in becoming a party of "the whole class," that is, a mass party. It is no accident that the majority of members who, with Revueltas, broke with the PCM to found the so-called "Liga Espartaco" in 1960 ended up joining the PRI, attracted by its "mass influence" and nationalist rhetoric. This summary of Revueltas' work merits a correction in reference to what we wrote in the first issue of *Espartaco* (Winter 1990-91), that "our tendency has taken up again the key point of Revueltas' break with Stalinism." In reality, Revueltas never transcended his Stalinist political framework.

## Gilly and the Pseudo-Trotskyist Left

The book *La Revolución Interrumpida* (*The Interrupted Revolution*) by the former pseudo-Trotskyist Adolfo Gilly is the bible of the revisionist left. In a merely formal way, Gilly accepted a key tenet of permanent revolution—that the stage of classic bourgeois revolutions had ended a long time ago—only to write that in the Mexican Revolution the peasantry played the socialist role that the working class could not undertake. For Gilly, the Mexican Revolution was an "interrupted revolution" because the radical peasant leaders like Zapata and Villa were assassinated. Thus, while the revolution was "temporarily" interrupted, Gilly finds that the bourgeois government of Lázaro Cárdenas in the 1930s took up socialist principles once again. This supports the bourgeois myth of the revolution that never ends and therefore justifies, from a supposedly Marxist viewpoint, subordination to Cardenismo and the current capitulation of the left to the PRD [the bourgeois-populist Party of the Democratic Revolution].

*continued on page 12*

# Mexico...

*(continued from page 11)*

Taking his liquidationist logic to its ultimate consequences, Gilly became an official in the current [Mexico City] government of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The same fate awaited his old Mandelite party, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT, Revolutionary Workers Party), which liquidated into the PRD and the Zapatista EZLN.

A current archetype of the reformist left's capitulation to the influence of bourgeois nationalism, also inspired by Gilly's "interrupted revolution," is the Partido Obrero Socialista. For the Morenoite POS as well, the Mexican Revolution could have continued...including even to socialism, if Zapata and Villa had not been assassinated. The POS writes:

> "While Madero and his followers planned to throw Díaz out of power to establish, mainly, a ***bourgeois-democratic system*** based on the principle of no re-election and effective suffrage, hundreds of revolutionaries worked clandestinely to overthrow the dictator and generate a ***social revolution***, which in essence would have socialist objectives....
>
> "Anarchists, Zapatistas and Villistas understood this desire perfectly well, and not always agreeing on how to achieve it, nevertheless fought in the same trench....
>
> "With this unprecedented event, and because of the objectives that inspired the Zapatista and Villista armies, the Mexican Revolution seemed to be headed toward a socialist revolution, which would finally destroy the bourgeoisie as the ruling class and establish a workers and peasants government. Nevertheless, in spite of the social conquests expressed in the Constitution of 1917, because the working class did not lead the revolution and because there was no revolutionary party to lead it, the Mexican Revolution fell into the hands of the national bourgeoisie, and at that point another dictatorship began to take shape: the *priato* [decades-long rule of the PRI]."
>
> —*El Socialista* No. 182, November 1993

These last references to the lack of a revolutionary party and the working class are merely demagogic, serving as the POS's red loincloth to cover its true nationalist and reformist program for the class struggle. It is sufficient to see what they wrote the previous year in referring to the capture of Mexico City by Zapata and Villa in December 1914:

> "Without knowing it, the Mexican peasants were placing themselves at that moment in the vanguard of the world revolution. It is a fact that has been preserved in the historical memory of the masses, an event that we must always remember, since it demonstrates the possibility that an organized and decisive people can put the bourgeoisie and the government in check and take power in this country."
>
> —*El Socialista* No. 166, November 1992

Like Gilly, the POS considers that the peasantry was—even without knowing it—the vanguard of the world revolution, and that the Magonista anarchists, along with Zapata and Villa, could have been the equivalent of a revolutionary party of the working class in the struggle for socialism...if they had just had a little more time. Nothing could be further from the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution!

The POS view of the Mexican Revolution is in accordance with its current reformist program and the patriotic language that fills the pages of *El Socialista*. If the peasantry was, according to the POS, "the vanguard of the world revolution" in 1914, it is logical that these reformists called for a vote for the EZLN in 1994. And if for the POS the anarchists, Zapatistas and Villistas were the vanguard of the world revolution, today they welcome without embarrassment any class-collaborationist front that emerges in this country—from its joint campaign with the PRD to "struggle" against NAFTA (*El Socialista* No. 182, November 1993) to its political support for the EZLN, the CND [pro-EZLN National Democratic Convention], El Barzón [a middle-class movement of bank debtors], etc., and its current petition campaign begging the Senate and the House of Representatives not to privatize the electric industry. The illusion of the POS that the bourgeois state can be reformed is shown in its call for the "democratic restructuring of judicial power" ("Draft Program of the Socialist Coalition, POS-LUS," 1998) and in its treasonous calls on the bourgeois state to intervene into the unions. In 1997, for example, the POS called for "imprisonment without bail for union leaders who sell sweetheart contracts to businesses" (*El Socialista* No. 225, February 1997). The conscious workers movement should sweep away these types of fake "socialist" parties.

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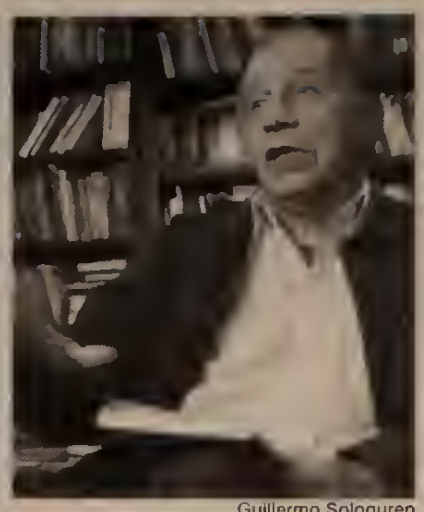

Guillermo Sologuren

**The late José Revueltas (left) and Adolfo Gilly, leftist writers who wrapped nationalist myths about Mexican Revolution in pseudo-Marxist garb.**

## The LTS and IG: Centrist Confusionism

The centrists of the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS, League of Workers for Socialism), a 1988 split from the POS, differ from their parent party only because they want the end of the PRI to come through the advent of a "[revolutionary constituent] Assembly that develops out of the overthrow of the hated PRI regime" and struggles against imperialism (*Estrategia Obrera* No. 7, September-October 1998). But in Mexico the semi-bonapartist bourgeois regime adopted a thin cover of bourgeois democracy which, although unstable, allowed the PRI to govern for decades with the politics of "the carrot and the stick." The PRD has shored up illusions in this discredited bourgeois parliamentarism, and today it governs Mexico City, several municipal governments around the country and the states of Baja California and Zacatecas. Calling here for a constituent assembly—a new parliamentary body—only serves to sow more illusions in the bourgeois PRD.

The fact that the LTS fetishizes bourgeois democracy is clearly seen in its assertion, in the same issue of its newspaper, that it would be a "Provisional Workers and Peasants Government" that would convene this assembly. As Trotsky noted in the Transitional Program:

> "This formula, 'workers' and farmers' government,' first appeared in the agitation of the Bolsheviks in 1917 and was definitely accepted after the October Revolution. In the final instance it represented nothing more than the popular designation for the already established dictatorship of the proletariat."

But for the LTS, the purpose of the dictatorship of the proletariat would be to convene...a bourgeois parliamentary body! Trotsky never proposed the constituent assembly as a possible organizational form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is an invention of the fake Trotskyists, who distort the Bolshevik call for a workers and peasants government, converting it into a call for a government to reform the bourgeois state.

Casasola Archive

**Lázaro Cárdenas utilized nationalism as ideological weapon to subordinate working class to bourgeois regime in 1930s.**

The centrists—revolutionary in word, reformist in deed—frequently borrow small pieces of the genuine Marxist program to hide their real appetites. Thus, the LTS writes: "The main tasks of the Revolution of 1910 that were left unfinished, such as giving land to the peasants, national independence to break the yoke of imperialism and elementary democratic demands, can only be fully and effectively accomplished under a government of the victorious working class" (*Estrategia Obrera* No. 2, December 1996). However, this is nothing more than a fig leaf to hide the LTS's illusions in the bourgeoisie. Trying to polemicize against Gilly and his old party, the LTS winds up kissing his hand:

> "The PRT, far from raising a consistent Trotskyist strategy to fight for the program of the second Mexican Revolution, to conclude the ***anti-capitalist revolution*** begun in 1910 (***interrupted*** by the triumph of the Carranza wing over the peasant armies of Villa and Zapata, imposing the reactionary Constitution of 1917 on the masses), ends up joining the Cárdenas government."
>
> —*Estrategia Internacional* No. 10, November-December 1998 (emphasis ours)

In the end, the LTS accepts Gilly's revisionist schema by which the Mexican Revolution, "anti-capitalist" in its inner dynamic, was "interrupted" by the fact that Villa and Zapata were murdered.

The Internationalist Group is not very different from the LTS. The IG's rejection of the perspective of permanent revolution is evident in the way it obscures the differences between the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the working class—the only class with the social power and consistent historic interest to lead the fight against the rule of capital. In spite of its Trotskyist pretensions, every time the IG tries to paraphrase or put into practice the perspective of permanent revolution, it jumbles together workers with other oppressed sectors. The IG takes this centrist confusionism onto the historical plane. Trying to distinguish itself from Gilly on the Mexican Revolution, the IG finally bows to him:

> "In its successive incarnations (PNR-PRM-PRI), this regime has presented itself as the 'party of the Mexican Revolution.' This is an enormous historical falsification. In truth it is the ***party of the firing squad against the revolution***, the party of the northern ranchers who assassinated the radical peasant and plebeian leaders Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa, and put an end to the revolution before it could become a full-fledged social revolution."
>
> —*The Internationalist*, April-May 1997

Here we see how the IG, like the LTS, leaves the door open to the implication that if Zapata and Villa had not been murdered, the Mexican Revolution could have continued and eventually become a "fully developed social revolution." The IG consciously uses this vague, classless phrase only to distinguish itself slightly from its pseudo-Trotskyist cousins.

But like good centrists, the IG tries to cover its tracks with apparently orthodox formulations. In the same article, it writes: "The Mexican Revolution was frustrated, above all, because of the absence of a proletarian vanguard with a program for workers revolution, the only way to complete the agrarian revolution and liberate the country from the yoke of imperialism." In spite of the IG's demagogic references to Trotskyism, its mystification of the peasant leaders and its defense of the anarchist bureaucrats of the Casa del Obrero Mundial are not isolated errors. With its frenetic passion to dilute the proletariat in an amorphous mass of "discontented sectors," the IG's rejection of permanent revolution becomes even clearer in its attempt to discover a nonexistent popular front around the PRD of Cárdenas in order to capitulate to this bourgeois formation.

As we explained in *Espartaco* No. 10 (Autumn-Winter 1997), a popular front is a ***bourgeois formation*** that ties the reformist organizations of the working class to the bourgeois parties. In Mexico, however, the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie has been particularly open, with the union movement ***directly*** tied to the bourgeoisie through bourgeois nationalism and its corporatist shackles. The dominance of this nationalism explains why mass reformist workers parties did not develop here and the pseudo-socialist left never overcame its marginalization in the workers movement.

In its insistence that a popular front exists in Mexico, which it uses as a lying argument that the Spartacists "abandoned" the struggle against the PRD, the IG presents as conclusive proof a para-


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# Egypt...

*(continued from page 1)*

Square. Despite claiming that it did not oppose the anti-Mubarak demonstrators, the military arrested hundreds, torturing many. Down with the emergency law! Free all victims of bonapartist state repression!

Together with the police, courts and prisons, the army is at the core of the capitalist state, an apparatus for the violent suppression of the working class and the oppressed. Above all, the drive to "restore stability" is aimed at the working class. Amid the anti-Mubarak protests, tens of thousands of workers launched strikes, which continue to this day. These have included some 6,000 workers on the Suez Canal, through which 8 percent of world trade travels. However, Canal pilots continued to work, ensuring movement of ships. Thousands of textile and steel workers went on strike in the industrial city of Suez, which saw some of the most militant protests. According to the London *Guardian* (28 January), protesters there "seized weapons stored in a police station and asked the policemen inside to leave the building, then burned it down." Cairo public transport workers continue to strike, while, in the wake of Mubarak's fall, strikes have spread to steel workers outside the capital, postal workers, textile workers in Mansoura and other cities as well as thousands of oil and gas workers.

In fighting for economic demands—against poverty-level wages, casual work and constant humiliation at the hands of the bosses—the working class is demonstrating the unique position it holds in making the wheels of the capitalist economy turn. This social power gives the working class the potential to lead all the impoverished masses in struggle against their abject condition. In a country where nearly half the population lives on $2 a day or less and where such misery is enforced through police-state repression, the democratic aspirations of the masses are intertwined with the struggle against their economic conditions.

Elementary democratic rights such as legal equality for women and the complete separation of religion and state; agrarian revolution to give land to the peasants; ending joblessness and grinding poverty: the basic aspirations of the masses cannot be met without the overthrow of the bonapartist capitalist order. The indispensable instrument for the working class to take the lead is a proletarian revolutionary party, which can be built only through relentless struggle against all bourgeois forces, from the military to the Brotherhood and the liberals who falsely claim to support the struggles of the masses. Such a party must act, in the words of Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin, as a "tribune of the people," fighting against the oppression of women, peasants, Coptic Christians, homosexuals and ethnic minorities.

Getty

**February 12: Army officer tries to quell crowd in Tahrir Square, one day after Mubarak's departure.**

The liberation of the productive forces from the chains of imperialism and its economic and political agents in the Egyptian bourgeoisie can come only through the conquest of power by the proletariat standing at the head of all the oppressed. This was accomplished for the first and only time with the victory of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. Led by the Bolshevik Party, the working class overthrew bourgeois rule, freeing the country from the imperialist yoke, abolishing private ownership of land and freeing the myriad oppressed nations and peoples of the former tsarist empire. The achievement of these democratic tasks was combined with the expropriation of the means of production by the workers state, laying the basis for the development of a collectivized planned economy.

## For Permanent Revolution!

Egypt is a country of combined and uneven development. Alongside modern industry there is a vast landless peasantry under the thumb of ruthless landlords. The country has a small layer of technologically savvy and highly educated youth together with a literacy rate of only 71 percent (59 percent for women). Medieval minarets and modern buildings vie in Cairo's skyline, while on its streets modern cars jostle for space with herds of goats and sheep and donkey-drawn carriages. Inhuman poverty and squalor compete with grotesque displays of wealth. The obscenely affluent enclave of Zamalek looks across the Nile at the Imbaba slum, where children drink from open sewers and at times get eaten alive by dogs and rats. Popular hatred for Mubarak was driven in no small part by the enormous fortune amassed by his family, estimated as high as $70 billion.

A regional power in its own right, Egypt is nonetheless a neocolony whose brutal and murderous bourgeoisie is tied—and cannot but be tied—by a million strings to world imperialism, which benefits from the exploitation, oppression and degradation of its masses. For decades, the main prop of the Mubarak regime was U.S. imperialism, for which Egypt is a linchpin for its domination of the oil-rich Near East. Beginning with Sadat's rule, Egypt has been a strategic ally of Zionist Israel and in recent years has aided in the starvation blockade of the Palestinians in Gaza, including by sealing the border in Sinai.

Throughout the upheaval against Mubarak, the Obama administration seesawed between expressing support for his regime—especially the "reforms" promised by his vice president Omar Suleiman, who has long played a key role in Washington's "war on terror" rendition and torture program—and mouthing criticisms of the government. The U.S. has poured in $1.3 billion a year to arm the Egyptian military. After Mubarak resigned, Obama intoned that the U.S. stands "ready to provide whatever assistance is necessary—and asked for—to pursue a credible transition to a democracy."

To get a taste of what Washington means by democracy, one need only look further east, to the corpses of more than one million Iraqis who died as a result of the 2003 invasion and occupation, as well as to the imperialist barbarism inflicted by U.S./NATO forces upon the peoples of Afghanistan. One need only look at the sheiks, despots and strongmen that litter the Near East, who along with the Israeli rulers act as U.S. imperialism's agents. When Obama says he wants an "orderly transition of power" in Egypt, he means he wants a "stable" Egypt, with the military fulfilling its role in the region on behalf of the U.S.

Authentic national and social liberation requires mobilizing the proletariat in revolutionary struggle against the imperialists *and* the domestic bourgeoisie. A proletarian revolution in Egypt would have an electrifying impact on workers and the oppressed throughout North Africa, the Near East and beyond. Over one-quarter of all Arab speakers live in Egypt, a country of over 80 million that has the largest proletariat in the region. Already, protests have erupted from Morocco to the U.S. client states of Jordan and Yemen in solidarity with the Egyptian masses and in opposition to those countries' own despotic rulers. In Algiers on February 12, some 35,000 cops descended upon a protest of 10,000 demanding the resignation of Abdelaziz Bouteflika, arresting hundreds.

In Gaza, thousands mobilized after Mubarak's resignation, waving Palestinian and Egyptian flags and desperately hoping that a new Egyptian regime would ease their starvation. Prior to February 11, both Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank had labored to suppress any solidarity demonstrations. A socialist revolution in Egypt would open a vista of national and social liberation for the oppressed Palestinian masses, and, extending a hand of working-class solidarity to the Hebrew-speaking proletariat of Israel, would help lay the basis for shattering the Zionist garrison state of Israel from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution.

Crucially, a proletarian revolution in Egypt would immediately face the need to extend to the advanced capitalist countries of West Europe and North America, which would lay the basis for the elimination of scarcity by establishing an international planned socialist economy. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, underlined in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

> "The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle on a national and international scale....
>
> "The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the

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graph from an article in *La Jornada* (2 May 1997), which reports:

> "The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) yesterday released its final list of candidates for the House of Representatives to fill the seats assigned to the party based on the proportion of votes for the entire country. It consists of leaders of university unions, the SNTE and the FAT; also peasant organizations such as CIOAC, UNTA and CODUC; ex-CNC members; the UCD; leaders and activists from El Barzón and popular urban organizations.... In the leading places, more than 50 percent are not PRD members."

And the IG fervently concludes: "Yes, there is a popular front in Mexico!" This jumble that the IG makes of the proletariat and the peasantry with organizations of renters and bank debtors recalls the old Stalinist concept of a "bloc of four classes." As Trotsky himself explained in his devastating "Critique of the Draft Program of the Communist International" (printed in *The Third International After Lenin*), following the defeat guided by the Comintern in China in 1925-27:

> "Those organizations which in capitalist countries label themselves peasant parties are in reality one of the varieties of bourgeois parties. Every peasant who has not adopted the proletarian position, abandoning his proprietor psychology, will inevitably follow the bourgeoisie when it comes to fundamental political issues.... The celebrated idea of 'workers' and peasants' parties' seems to have been specially created to camouflage bourgeois parties which are compelled to seek support from the peasantry but who are also ready to absorb workers into their ranks."

Or, as Lenin once expressed it, urging the proletariat to organize separately from the peasantry:

> "We stand by the peasant movement to the end; but we have to remember that it is the movement of another class, ***not the one*** which can and will hring about the socialist revolution."
>
> —"Revision of the Agrarian Programme of the Workers' Party" (1906)

Against the efforts of the fake socialists and centrists who embellish bourgeois democracy and the current level of consciousness of the working class, we communists struggle for the political independence of the proletariat to advance the cause of socialism. This will happen in Mexico by building a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party to sweep away the deep nationalism in the workers organizations that poisons and divides their struggles and to break the chains of the bourgeois state's corporatist control of the unions—a legacy of Cardenismo.

An essential part of this struggle is winning the sectors oppressed under capitalism to the program of workers revolution. The struggle for the liberation of women is especially important in a society like Mexico, where the oppression and enslavement of women are strongly rooted and are buttressed by nationalism and the church. With a large percentage of the proletariat made up of women, especially but not exclusively in the northern part of the country in the *maquiladoras*, the proletarian revolution cannot triumph unless the working class wins the confidence of women workers, by acting as a tribune of the people.

AFP

**Masked Zapatista guerrilla leader Subcomandante Marcos with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, leader of bourgeois-populist PRD at time of EZLN uprising.**

The task we face is, as Trotsky noted, "a succession of social revolutions, transferring power to the hands of the most resolute class, which afterwards applies this power for the abolition of all classes" ["The Revolution in Spain," January 1931]. The revolutionary-internationalist task Trotsky refers to is still before us today, and it is from the point of view of permanent revolution that we must evaluate the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Only then will the working class be able to take the correct path toward victory. Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party! For new October Revolutions!■

# Egypt...

*(continued from page 13)*

> world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet."

### Break with Bourgeois Nationalism!

The present situation in Egypt provides an extraordinary opening for Marxists to put forward a series of transitional demands that link the current struggles of the working class and the oppressed to the conquest of proletarian power. But virtually the entire left internationally has offered nothing but empty cheerleading for what they dub the "Egyptian Revolution." This is exemplified by Workers World Party in the U.S., which, as the military took control of the country on February 11, headlined: "WWP Rejoices with the Egyptian People."

In Egypt, the Revolutionary Socialists (RS) group, which is inspired by the late Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party in Britain, issued a statement on February 1 calling on Egyptian workers to "use your power and victory will be ours!" But this is not an appeal for the working class to fight for power. On the contrary, the RS dissolves the power of the working class into the classless demand for "all power to the people" and the call for a "popular revolution." While declaring "Down with the system!" the RS identifies that system as the Mubarak regime rather than the capitalist order. Left out of the statement is even the mere mention of the word "socialism." Nor is there a hint of opposition to the liberal bourgeois democrats like ElBaradei, the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood (see article, page 3) or the pervasive nationalism that serves to bind the exploited and the oppressed to the Egyptian bourgeoisie. In fact, the RS appeals to crass Egyptian nationalism, declaring, "Revolution must restore Egypt's independence, dignity and leadership in the region."

Grey Villet

Reuters

**Left: State-owned TV manufacturing plant, 1963. Right: Textile factory workers demonstrate at their factory in Mahalla al-Kobra, 2008. While women have faced increased oppression fueled by religious reaction in recent decades, they have emerged as a leading force in strikes.**

The National

**Squalid conditions in Imbaba, one of many slums in Cairo.**

Amid rampant illusions in the military, the RS complained, "This army is no longer the people's army." The army of the *capitalist* regimes of Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak was *never* "the people's army." Now these reformists are even promoting the despised police, rejoicing in a February 13 statement that "the wave of social revolution is widening every day as new sections join the protests, such as policemen, *mukhabarin* [intelligence agents] and police officers"! So deep are the RS's illusions in the benevolence of the capitalist state that they embrace the butchers, rapists and torturers of the regime, the very forces that have long terrorized the population, that murdered at least 300 protesters in recent weeks and that helped organize the February 2 assault on Tahrir Square.

### Working Class Must Take the Lead

The Egyptian youth who initiated the "January 25 Revolution" have been hailed by one and all, from bourgeois oppositionists to the state-run media that had, until the fall of Mubarak, denounced them as foreign agents. Among these mainly petty-bourgeois youth, a good number had been animated not only by their own grievances but particularly also by the restive Egyptian proletariat, which for the last decade has engaged in a wave of struggle that included over two million workers participating in over 3,000 strikes, sit-ins and other actions. These were carried out in defiance of the corrupt leadership of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation, which was established by Nasser in 1957 as an arm of the state.

At bottom, the petty bourgeoisie—an intermediate class comprising many layers with disparate interests—is incapable of advancing a coherent, independent perspective and will necessarily fall under the sway of one of the two main classes of capitalist society: the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Among these militant youth, who showed incredible courage in taking on the Mubarak regime, those committed to fighting on behalf of the downtrodden must be won to the revolutionary internationalist program of Trotskyism. Such elements will be critical to forging a revolutionary party, which like Lenin's Bolsheviks will be founded through a fusion of the most advanced workers with declassed intellectuals.

In opposition to a proletarian revolutionary perspective, the reformists of the United Secretariat (USec) present bourgeois democracy as the pinnacle of struggle. In a January 2011 article posted on the Internet titled, "In Tunisia and Egypt the Revolutions Are Underway," the USec demands "opening a process of free elections for a constituent Assembly," presenting this as part of a "programme of a democratic government that would be at the service of the workers and the population."

There will be no government that "would be at the service of the workers and the population" without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. As Lenin wrote in his December 1917 "Theses on the Constituent Assembly": "Every direct or indirect attempt to consider the question of the Constituent Assembly from a formal, legal point of view, within the framework of ordinary bourgeois democracy and disregarding the class struggle and civil war, would be a betrayal of the proletariat's cause, and the adoption of the bourgeois standpoint." We are for the workers and peasants driving out government rulers appointed from above. We demand an end to the ban on political parties and call for a revolutionary constituent assembly based on universal suffrage. The achievement of this demand requires a popular insurrection to overthrow the military regime. At the same time, Marxists must fight for mass, inclusive working-class organizations as embryonic organs of proletarian state power.

Our purpose is to win the oppressed and downtrodden to the side of the working class, counterposing its social power and leadership to all wings of the Egyptian national bourgeoisie and struggling to break the masses from illusions in bourgeois democracy. Throughout the strikes carried out over the past decade and during the current upheaval, workers formed strike committees and other bodies to coordinate their actions. These organs of struggle directly pose the need for trade unions independent of the capitalist state and all bourgeois forces. Today, there is a palpable basis to advance a perspective of building broader organizations of the working class. These include joint strike committees, drawing in workers from different striking plants; workers defense guards, organized independently of the military, to defend against the regime's thugs and strikebreakers; popular committees based on the working class to take charge of distribution of food and goods in the face of shortages and black market corruption.

The emergence of such organizations, culminating in workers councils, would pose the question of which class rules society. Acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggles against the exploiters, workers councils, such as the soviets that arose during the Russian Revolution, would be organs of dual power, vying for power with the bourgeoisie. It is only when the working class comes forward as a serious contender for power that the conscript base of the army, overwhelmingly drawn from the working class and peasantry, can be split from the bourgeois officer corps and won to the side of the proletariat.

Reuters

**Farmer in the Nile Delta.**

### For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

While protests in Egypt have centered on secular and democratic demands, images of the protests show repeated sessions of prayer—not only Islamic but also a Coptic prayer in Tahrir Square on Sunday, February 6, "The Day of the Martyrs." Religion is omnipresent in Egypt, promoted by Islamists, the Coptic church and the government, whose line can be summed up as: if they can't have food, let the people have God. This deep religiosity weighs like a stone on women, whose conditions of life have worsened over the last several decades. Any socialist organization that does not take up the fight for women's liberation in Egypt is a sham and an obstacle to human liberation.

The women who came out to Tahrir Square and elsewhere in Egypt were more often than not wearing the headscarf. More than 80 percent of women in Egypt wear the headscarf—not by law but by force of a social norm based on obscurantism—much to the consternation of many of their mothers, who decades earlier fought to take it off.

Women's oppression goes to the heart of Egyptian society. Together with the prevalence of religion, it is rooted in the country's backwardness, which is reinforced by imperialist subjugation. Egyptian law codifies this oppression. The Constitution declares, "The State shall guarantee coordination between woman's duties towards her family and her work in the society" and "the principal source of legislation is Islamic Jurisprudence (Sharia)." Polygamy is legal, as is repudiation (in which a man can divorce his wife by simply saying, "I divorce you"). Abortion is illegal, with very few exceptions, and by law a woman is subordinate to her father or husband. Egyptian law treats adultery by a man and by a woman as two very different things, the latter being far graver.

Though illegal, female genital mutilation is rampant, and equally so among Muslims and Christians. According to the

United Nations, *96 percent* of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone genital mutilation. "Honor killings" are also rampant among Muslims and Christians, although statistics are impossible to find as these murders are either unreported or reported as suicides. A brief glance at Egyptian films and television will show such barbarism to be a highly valued and well-respected tradition. Egyptian law has mitigating exceptions to punishing murder, allowing judges to reduce sentences for men who kill women as a result of "crimes of passion."

The courageous Egyptian socialist and feminist Nawal El-Saadawi has written numerous works on the oppression of women in the Near East. In her 1980 classic, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, she spoke of the entrenched obsession with "honor":

> "Arab society still considers that the fine membrane which covers the aperture of the external genital organs is the most cherished and most important part of a girl's body, and is much more valuable than one of her eyes, or an arm, or a lower limb. An Arab family does not grieve as much at the loss of a girl's eye as it does if she happens to lose her virginity. In fact if the girl lost her life, it would be considered less of a catastrophe than if she lost her hymen."

At the same time, women are a crucial part of the working class, where they have played a leading role in the strikes over the last decade, especially in the textile industry. One of the most dramatic of these was the December 2006 textile strike in Mahalla al-Kobra. More than 20,000 workers went out. And it was the women workers who led the strike, walking out as the men continued working. Protesting outside the plant, they started chanting, "Where are the men? Here are the women!" This had the intended effect, as the men joined them, launching one of the biggest strikes Egypt had seen in years.

The Egyptian woman may be the slave of slaves, but she is also a vital part of the very class that will lay the material basis for her liberation by breaking the chains of social backwardness and religious obscurantism through socialist revolution. As Trotsky stressed in a 1924 speech, "Perspectives and Tasks in the East," "There will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker."

Reuters

**Algiers, February 12: Protesters shout anti-government slogans. Regime mobilized tens of thousands of cops who overwhelmed demonstrators, arresting hundreds.**

### The Bankruptcy of Egyptian Nationalism

Egyptian rulers have long played on the fact that, uniquely in North Africa and the Near East, the country's modern borders are similar to its ancient ones. This supposedly supports the claim that the Egyptian nation goes back to the dawn of civilization. In reality, Egyptian nationalism is the product of the modernizing work of early 19th-century Albanian Ottoman ruler Mohammed Ali, who created the first secular schools, established the first national army and laid the basis for the emergence of a domestic bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Egypt remained in thrall to the European colonial powers.

The strength of Egyptian nationalist mythology is also seen in the adulation of the rule of left-nationalist strongman Colonel Nasser, including by many on the left. Central to the deep popular faith in the military is the fact that Nasser's regime marked the first time that Egyptians ran the country since the Persian conquest in 526 BC. Since Nasser took power in 1952, every Egyptian ruler has come out of the military.

The Egyptian army is also the only Arab army to have inflicted a black eye on the Israeli military, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War (after suffering a humiliating defeat in 1967). In speaking of how the army is "no longer the people's army," the Revolutionary Socialists group wrote in its February 1 statement, "This army is not the one which defeated the Zionist enemy in October 1973" (the war actually ended in a stalemate). In fact, the 1973 war, like the 1967 and 1948 wars, was nothing more than a battle between two regional powers for their own interests, in which the proletariat had no side. In contrast, the international working class was duty-bound to militarily defend Egypt against imperialist attack during the 1956 war launched after Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal.

As for Israel, there is no question that the Zionist state is the brutal enemy of the Palestinian masses, and we demand the immediate withdrawal of all Israeli troops and settlers from the Occupied Territories. But so are the Arab rulers, who have the blood of tens of thousands of Palestinians on their hands. The social and national liberation of the Palestinians requires not only the sweeping away of the Zionist state but also the overthrow of the capitalist Arab rulers in Jordan, where half the population is Palestinian, and elsewhere in the region. We understand that it will be no easy task to break the Hebrew-speaking proletariat from the grip of Zionism. But any view of Israel that rejects the perspective of Arab/Hebrew workers revolution dooms the Palestinian masses to their national oppression.

Support to Arab nationalism has led to the bloody defeat of workers movements throughout the Near East, not least in Egypt, where Nasser came to power with the support of the Egyptian Stalinists. Upon coming to power, Nasser sought to appeal to the U.S. but was rebuffed; he then turned to the Soviet degenerated workers state for financial, military and political aid. At the same time, to consolidate his rule, he suppressed the Communists, imprisoning, torturing and killing them. But even as he brutalized them, the Communist Party continued to support Nasser, liquidating into his Arab Socialist Union in 1965.

Behind this abject capitulation was the Stalinist schema of "two-stage revolution," postponing the socialist revolution to an indefinite future while in the first "democratic stage" the proletariat is subordinated to an allegedly "anti-imperialist" national bourgeoisie. History shows that the "second stage" consists of killing communists and massacring workers. Millions of workers who looked to the Communist parties for leadership in Iraq, Iran and elsewhere were betrayed by their Stalinist misleaders. In Egypt, such betrayal was sold as support for Nasser's "Arab Socialism."

In fact, "Arab Socialism" was a myth, amounting to capitalism with heavy state investment. It was designed to suppress the proletariat, which had engaged in substantial struggles in the post-World War II period, including against British occupation. The role Nasser saw for workers was captured by his statement: "The workers don't demand; we give." In exchange for the proletariat's passivity, Nasser instituted several reforms, raising wages and reducing unemployment. But eventually, state investment dried up, and there was no longer much to "give."

After Sadat came to power in 1970, the Communists sought to reorganize. Sadat responded by unleashing the Muslim Brotherhood to effectively crush them. He also expelled Soviet advisers (after having used Soviet weaponry to fight Israel in the 1973 war) and instituted the "open door" policy of economic liberalization, cutting food and other subsidies as a way to address economic stagnation. This was taken further and deeper by Mubarak and his neoliberal program of mass privatizations. Contrary to popular illusions, Mubarak did not represent a break from Nasserism, but rather its legacy. Under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak, Egypt remained subjugated to the imperialist world market and its dictates. The real difference between Nasser and Mubarak is that while the former was a genuinely popular bonapartist ruler, the latter was widely despised.

If the powerful and combative Egyptian proletariat is to come to the fore at the head of the oppressed and fight for its own rule, it must be broken from its nationalist illusions. What is urgently posed today is the building of a workers party, section of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International, that will fight for a proletarian Egypt, part of a socialist federation of the Near East.■

## 14th Amendment...

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in the mass they remain to this day.

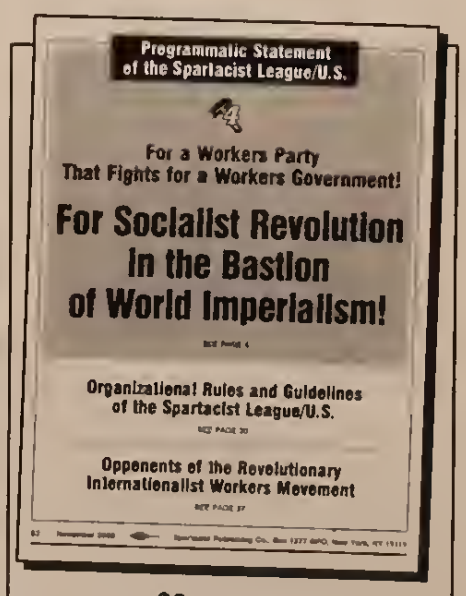
With the mass migration of blacks into Northern industrial centers, they became a crucial component of the proletariat, although as the "last hired, first fired." While the mass struggles of the civil rights movement broke the back of the Jim Crow system, what legal equality was gained did not and could not address the material roots of black oppression in the American capitalist system: segregation in ghetto hellholes; desperate poverty; mass unemployment, particularly for black youth.

As against both liberal integrationists and black nationalists, our struggle for black liberation is based on the program of revolutionary integrationism. While opposing every manifestation of racial oppression, fighting in particular to mobilize the social power of the multiracial labor movement, we underline that full equality for the black masses requires that the working class rip the economy out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and reorganize it on a socialist basis. This will lay the groundwork for the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivized economy, with jobs and quality housing, health care and education for all.

As the Labor Black Leagues, initiated by and fraternally allied to the Spartacist League, state in their program: "We fight to win the entire working class, including white workers as well as the growing number of Latino and other immigrants, to the fight for black liberation, strategic to the American revolution. Black and working-class militants must stand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and in their defense against racist and chauvinist anti-immigrant attacks. An injury to one is an injury to all!" The Spartacist League is fighting to build a multiracial workers party that will champion the cause of all the exploited and oppressed in the fight for a socialist America. Only then can the wealth produced by labor be deployed for the benefit of society as a whole, laying the basis for eradicating all inequalities based on class, race and national origin.■

Bill Hackwell

**Teamsters sanitation workers in Alameda County, California, protest lockout, July 2007.**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WORKERS VANGUARD

## Immigrant Rights, Black Rights Go Hand in Hand

# 14th Amendment: Gain of Civil War Victory Over Slavery

As they run around the country waving their little pocket Constitutions, the Republican right, including Tea Party adherents, have launched an assault on the fundamental right of citizenship. These "strict constructionists," who claim every word in the Constitution is nearly as sacrosanct as those in the King James Bible, are calling to amend or repeal the Fourteenth Amendment, which bestows citizenship on all persons born in the U.S. The racist yahoos are most immediately threatening immigrant men and women and also their children, with those born in the U.S. reviled by these bigots as "anchor babies." But make no mistake: The attack on the Fourteenth Amendment, one of the gains of the Civil War that destroyed black chattel slavery, underscores that anti-immigrant chauvinism threatens black people as well.

The in-your-face racism of the Tea Party types allows the Democratic Party—the other party of racist capitalist rule—to more easily posture as the friend of immigrants, even as the Obama administration carries out a coldly efficient deportation campaign. Over the past two years, Obama's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported nearly 800,000 immigrants, setting new records. While scolding Arizona Republican governor Jan Brewer for signing into law the state's apartheid-style anti-immigrant pass law, the Obama administration metes out essentially the same treatment. Its "Secure Communities" program uses the cops to harass anyone who doesn't look "American" and to sweep up immigrant workers. Maria Ledezma knows as much. Ledezma, who herself was brought to Arizona from Mexico as a toddler, was deported from Phoenix to the Mexican border town of Nogales. Sobbing as she explained her forced separation from her three daughters, all U.S. citizens, she said, "I never imagined being here. I'll bet right now that my girls are asking, 'Where's Mom?'"

From moves in state legislatures to restrict who qualifies for "citizenship," including by creating two tiers of birth certificates, up to the White House, the attacks on immigrant rights are truly imbued with "bipartisan spirit." It is no accident that this occurs in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, with immigrants charged with "stealing jobs" and grabbing government handouts. This is but one of the myriad ways the capitalist rulers whip up ethnic and racial hostilities to divide the working class and weaken its ability to struggle. The labor movement must see the struggle against anti-immigrant and anti-black racism as central to its own cause. ***No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!***

AP

**Police round up immigrants in Phoenix, April 2010.**

At this stage, moves to abrogate the Fourteenth Amendment may not go very far. But there has been a very real and concerted attack on fundamental rights of citizenship under the so-called "war on terror." As we warned, the "anti-terror" witchhunt that first took aim against people from predominantly Muslim countries soon targeted black people, the labor movement and the rights of the populace as a whole.

In 2002, the government seized U.S. citizen Jose Padilla and locked him up for years as an "unlawful enemy combatant" without filing charges or allowing him a trial, in which the government would have to prove his "guilt." As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee wrote in an *amici curiae* brief on Padilla's behalf (printed in the PDC's *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* No. 31, Summer 2003):

> "The Executive's declaration that its 'war against terrorism' forfeits constitutional protections for designated individuals echoes the regimes of shahs and colonels and presidents 'for life' from the Near East to Africa to Latin America, to justify the mass imprisonment and unmarked graves of political dissidents. Like them, the Executive is proclaiming the ***right to disappear*** citizens of its choosing."

Extending this authority, last year the Obama administration gave legal sanction for the targeted assassination of a U.S. citizen living abroad—Muslim cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, accused of being an Al Qaeda operative.

Meanwhile, an estimated 5.3 million Americans are denied the right to vote because of laws that prohibit voting by people with felony convictions, including some 1.4 million black men. Thus, in Florida, over 30 percent of black men cannot vote. We demand: ***Full voting rights for prisoners and felons!***

The attack on the Fourteenth Amendment speaks to the inextricable link between the fight for black freedom in this country and the defense of immigrant rights. This was captured in the negative by Danny Verdin, Republican majority whip for the South Carolina state Senate and a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, in explaining his intention to introduce state citizenship laws. Pointing to the coming April commemoration of Confederate troops firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston at the start of the Civil War, Verdin proclaimed: "South Carolina may have been out front leading 150 years ago at Fort Sumter; but we are happy to work collaboratively on this to cure a malady."

Passed during the period of Radical Reconstruction following the defeat of the Southern slavocracy in the Civil War, the Fourteenth Amendment for the first time enunciated the concept of national citizenship, which it defined as applying to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof." This overturned the infamous 1857 *Dred Scott* decision in which the Supreme Court ruled that blacks, slave or free, were not citizens according to the Constitution, declaring that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

According to the Fourteenth Amendment, states could not "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." However, this blow to the slave masters' doctrine of "states' rights" was almost immediately followed by a Supreme Court ruling that the protections contained in the amendment were not binding on the individual states, leaving in place a patchwork of widely varying local laws. At the same time, the victory of the North had consolidated the American nation-state, creating for the first time a strong central government and military apparatus. With the rapid development of a national capitalist economy, the U.S. soon emerged as an imperialist power, waging wars and military occupations abroad.

With the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, marked by the removal of remaining Union Army troops from the South under the Compromise of 1877, a new system of exploitation enforced by racist repression was established. Legally freed from slavery, blacks were subject to the tyranny of the defeated slaveowners and their Ku Klux Klan henchmen. The former slaves became tenants and sharecroppers toiling on land owned by the white propertied class, consisting of elements of the old slavocracy and a new Southern bourgeoisie with strong ties to Northern capital. In the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court codified "separate but equal" segregation, which remained the law of the land for the next seven decades. Black people were consolidated anew as an oppressed race-color caste at the bottom of American capitalist society, where

*continued on page 15*

Military History Institute

Harper's Weekly

**Gun crews of "Corps d'Afrique" battery at Port Hudson, Louisiana, 1863. Entry of 200,000 black troops was key in Union victory over slaveholding South In Civil War. Right: Southern black men voting in 1867 during Reconstruction.**

# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 975

4 March 2011


## No Illusions in Democratic Party!

# Wisconsin Showdown Over Union Rights

On February 26, some 100,000 pro-union demonstrators flooded the streets of Madison, Wisconsin, following nearly two weeks of protests against Republican governor Scott Walker's proposed union-busting bill, which would strip public employees of most of their collective bargaining rights. The massive demonstrations began on Valentine's Day, when over 1,000 workers and University of Wisconsin students occupied the state Capitol building rotunda. They flooded into the lawmakers' chambers, with hundreds camping at the Capitol every night since. This action sparked the teachers unions to organize sick-outs, causing schools to close across the state. Sensing a draconian threat to their livelihoods and rights, tens of thousands of unionists and their families as well as students and other supporters have flocked to Madison on a daily basis demanding, "Kill the Bill!"

It is in the vital interest of the entire labor movement to defend Wisconsin's public employee unions and spike the union-busting "budget repair bill." This deadly law would eliminate public sector collective bargaining on any issue besides wages, limit raises to no more than cost-of-living increases, and require public sector unions to endure mandatory annual recertification votes that would threaten the very existence of these unions. Under the hill, employee

*continued on page 8*

## The Right to Organize Under Attack

# All Labor Must Fight Assault on Public Workers Unions!

Reuters; Hoffman/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (inset left), Gabel/Syracuse Post-Standard (inset right)

**Demonstrators occupy Wisconsin capitol to protest union-busting bill pushed by Republican governor Scott Walker (left). As part of nationwide attack on public workers, Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo (right) has demanded massive concessions from New York public unions.**

Millions of working people have been made to pay with their jobs, homes and meager social benefits to bail out the Wall Street and corporate magnates whose financial swindles kicked off the worst economic crisis since the 1930s Great Depression. Amid this devastation, corporate profits last year hit the highest mark in their 60-year recorded history. The banks are wallowing in money and once again handing out millions in bonuses. General Motors, whose survival was purchased through slashing the jobs, wages and benefits of auto workers, boasted nearly $5 billion in profit last year. Having bilked the public purse of countless billions for this "recovery," Democrats and Republicans are now whipping up an outcry against public workers unions as supposedly living high off the hog at the taxpayers' expense.

The industrial unions have been ravaged by the deindustrialization of America and the attendant one-sided class war kicked off with the smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981. The United Auto Workers—once the symbol of working-class power in this country—has been reduced to less than a third of its once 1.5 million members. With the rate of unionization in the private sector falling below 7 percent, public workers are now the majority of union members in the U.S. Many of them are constrained by the bosses' laws from going on strike—and striking is the most important weapon a union has.

It is not just Republicans, high on their midterm election sweep, who are taking a sledgehammer to the unions. The Obama administration kicked things off with its assault on the seniority rights and other gains of teachers unions, followed most recently by imposing a two-year wage freeze on two million federal government workers. From the White House to state capitols and city halls across America, the capitalist rulers are out to further shackle and maim the unions, if not destroy them outright.

This is a war being fought by the

*continued on page 9*

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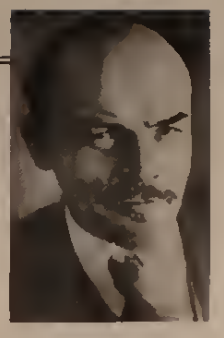
**Forge a Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!**
**For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!**

TROTSKY

# On Communist Work Among Women in Soviet Central Asia



LENIN

March 8 marks International Women's Day. In honor of that proletarian holiday, we print below excerpts from a report by Varsenika Kasparova titled "Forms and Methods of Work Among the Women of the Soviet East." The report was published in a 1924 Communist Party of Great Britain pamphlet called *Work Among Women*.

By sweeping away the capitalist order throughout the tsarist empire, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution drastically changed the lives of women. In overwhelmingly Muslim Soviet Central Asia, the Bolsheviks faced the enormous task of overthrowing pre-feudal and tribal social and economic relations that were inextricably linked to the virtual enslavement of women. Bringing the peoples from these backward regions over to the side of revolution could only happen to the extent that they understood that the transformation of society—to which they themselves would contribute—was in their own interest.

The Zhenotdel (the Bolshevik Party's Department of Working Women and Peasant Women) sent Bolshevik cadre across the Steppe to bring the vision of socialist emancipation to Muslim women and draw them actively into the work. Zhenotdel organizers and educators at times even donned the *paranja* (head-to-toe veil) in order to meet with these women. They faced threats from every sort of counterrevolutionary tendency, and both they and the brave women they worked with faced violence and death. By 1924, Zhenotdel organizations existed in many areas.

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution began to lay the material foundations for the liberation of women. But without the international extension of the revolution, especially to the advanced capitalist countries, the material basis for the elimination of scarcity and its attendant oppressions could not be realized. The pressure of imperialist encirclement, the devastation of the working class during the Civil War and the lengthy isolation of the Russian Revolution enabled a bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin to usurp political power in a political counterrevolution in 1923-24. Beginning then, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled and the purposes for which the USSR was ruled all changed. In 1930, the Soviet government liquidated the Zhenotdel. After decades of Stalinist misrule, capitalist counterrevolution triumphed in 1991-92, a world-historic defeat for the international working class and for the women of the former Soviet Union.

Varsenika Kasparova was co-director of the Zhenotdel with longtime Bolshevik cadre Alexandra Kollontai. She also headed the Agitational Department of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, whose teams she deployed throughout Trotsky's Red Army. Of Tatar origin, Kasparova was responsible for the countries of the East in the Communist International's International Women's Secretariat (IWS). She was prominent in Trotsky's Left Opposition, which fought the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union, including while she held her post in the IWS. In 1941, she was executed in a Stalinist prison.

* * *

THE Soviet Government, having announced the most complete and thoroughgoing programme the world has ever known for the abolition of all forms of oppression of man by man, was not content with mere formal proclamations, but took immediate measures for their execution. Thus, in dealing with the question of nationalities, the Soviet Government not only proclaimed the equality of all nationalities living within the Soviet borders, but took practical steps to make them equal in fact. Since equality is only possible among nations which have attained the same level of economic, cultural and political development, the first step along this line was, of necessity, immediate assistance to the most backward nations in order to raise them to the level of development that had been attained by the more progressive peoples. Under the special conditions of the Soviet Union, particular attention had to be paid to the people living in the Eastern border countries where the colonial policy of the Tsar, resulting in the artificial retention of whole nations in a primitive state, had brought about the most disastrous results. The main forces had, therefore, to be diverted to the Eastern borders—the weakest section of the national front. The Soviet Government was faced with a great historical task in the East. First there was the problem of developing and quickening the economic life, of replacing the prevailing primitive forms of agriculture and cattle-breeding with more modern methods, and of building up local industrial centres capable of quickly shaking off the survivals of feudalism. Then came the problem of raising the cultural level of the working masses, of waging an energetic campaign against such relics of barbarism as polygamy, religious prejudices, ancient customs, and the purchasing of wives. Parallel with this, it was necessary to familiarise the population with the elements of culture, to abolish illiteracy, to reform their social life and finally to undertake the task of the Communist education of the workers.

Central Museum of the Revolution, Moscow

**Communist cadres of Zhenotdel, Bolshevik Party commission for work among women, teach literacy in Soviet Central Asia, 1924.**

But the execution of all these measures, leading to the complete liberation of the backward peoples of the East, is inextricably bound up with the question of the liberation of the Oriental women who are still incomparably more enslaved and oppressed than men. The debased position of the women of the East, which is an outrage to human dignity, is directly due to the fact that the Eastern women take no part in productive labour and are confined entirely to the subsidiary labour of the home and the care of the family. Economically helpless, the Eastern woman is completely at the mercy of her husband or her father, who are the absolute masters of her fate. Her world is limited to the bedroom, the kitchen, and the children, and thus the woman becomes sluggish and passive, a drag on every forward movement.

The backwardness of the women of the Eastern countries is the main obstacle in the road not only of the reorganisation of family and social relationships, but of the economic structure. And without that fundamental change there can be no thought of the awakening of the East. In view of these conditions, the first task is to release the suffering women of the East from the grip of ancient social forms and religious prejudices in which she is held, and help her to stand on her feet and enjoy those rights guaranteed to her by Soviet law. No matter how difficult this task appears, we cannot wave it aside or put it off until tomorrow, for without the liberation of the women, the abolition of national oppression is impossible. Moreover, the emancipation of Eastern women will mean an increase in the productivity of labour in Russia as well as the broadening and reinforcing of the social basis on which the Communist Party depends in its constructive work. Although incapable of grasping the meaning and substance of Bolshevism mentally, the toiling women of the East, awakening to the new life, cannot but instinctively sympathise with the Communists for the very reason that they belong to the most oppressed class of society and they are drawn involuntarily into the struggle for liberation, carrying with them all the passion of one who but yesterday was a slave. For all these reasons the work among the Eastern women occupies a unique position, and the question of the apparatus directing the work, the conditions under which it is carried on, and the forms and methods employed, require particular attention. The Working Women's Department serves as the apparatus for organising the toiling women of the East on the basis of their economic interests, aiding in their cultural development and attracting them into Soviet and party life....

With all the heroic efforts of the Women's Department, it is impossible as yet to train a sufficient number of workers from among the masses of working women to carry on all the work that is necessary among the hundreds of thousands of unenlightened women of the East. Only if the work among the Eastern women is recognised as the problem of the party as a whole, and if the working women's department is able, through the Press and special reports at non-party peasant conferences, to develop sufficiently widespread agitation among the male population of the East, shall we have the required conditions for developing the work, or, more exactly, an apparatus capable of directing the work.

But the mere presence of a working apparatus does not necessarily ensure the success of its activities. This depends on whether the task is approached correctly, and whether the forms and methods chosen are practicable.

A certain amount of experience has already been accumulated, in relation to both these particular questions, enabling us to select those ways and means which have already been proved applicable to the unique conditions we have in the East. The first thing to bear in mind is that the work of the Women's Department must not be confined to working women employed in the factories, but should be carried on among women engaged in home industries, women peasants and housekeepers. And in every case special attention should be paid to young girls, for they are especially good material both for educational propaganda work and as prospective members of various kinds of organisations....

In organising work in the Eastern borderlands we must not for one moment forget that every one of these national republics and regions represents a separate world, with its own customs and habits determined by its isolated economic life. In adapting themselves to these special conditions, the Women's Department workers must avoid equally any survival of the imperialistic attitude toward the border regions, with its contempt for special national needs and mistrust of the native workers, and any tendencies in the direction of local Chauvinism, finding expression in an exaggeration of local needs to the detriment of the interest

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**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint*

The closing date for news in this issue is March 1.

**No. 975** **4 March 2011**

## Toronto: International Socialists on Egypt, Iran

# Cheerleaders for Class Collaboration

*We print below a report by a comrade from the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League. The report covers our intervention into a February 8 forum in Toronto, "From Tunisia to Egypt: Resistance to Revolution," sponsored by the International Socialists (I.S.), Canadian affiliate of the International Socialist Tendency of the late Tony Cliff. For more on the Cliffites and the Islamic fundamentalists in Egypt, see "Pandering to Reactionary Muslim Brotherhood" (WV No. 974, 18 February).*

The room was packed with people standing up at the back and at the entrance door. There were about 50 independents, two-thirds of them youth. Most young people seemed to be Arab and were politically raw but interested in discussing the recent events. Clearly, the events in Egypt are awakening the interest of some youth.

There were two speakers. The first, Mohammed Shokr from Mohamed ElBaradei's bourgeois Egyptian National Association for Change, did not say much but showed his "anti-imperialism" by saying that it is in the interests of the U.S. and Israel to have a democratic regime because it will be stable, given that Egypt under Mubarak is unstable. He also cheered the crowd by saying that we are witnessing a revolution made by people for people, that the Egyptian people are not divided (there are only government thugs against them), that Arabs are ready for democracy and that protesters (including his son) are "having fun" in Tahrir Square.

The other speaker, James Clark from the International Socialists, spoke much longer. As expected, there was not a word of opposition to ElBaradei or the Muslim Brotherhood, but there was a lot about building an anti-Mubarak front. He said that the movement did not come out of nowhere; it started in 2003 in protests against the war in Iraq and developed through the Cairo conferences. He praised these class-collaborationist "anti-imperialist" conferences and pointed to them as examples to emulate, including the Kefaya movement (the bourgeois Egyptian Movement for Change). He said the next stage needs to be a general strike, replicated in every workplace, and that the protests need to be escalated, for example by shutting down the Suez Canal. He added that new organizational forms will develop in which communists, socialists, Muslims, Christians, males, females are brought together.

Despite our hands being up throughout the discussion round, the Cliffites were determined to not let us speak. We had to wait until a second round and until it became embarrassing for them. Cliffite Pam Frache spoke first on independent trade unions being formed in Egypt. Another Cliffite advertised a campaign organized by the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War, so far called the "Toronto-Arab Solidarity Campaign" (they have not decided on the name yet). Its aim is to demand that the Canadian government stand with Egyptian democracy!

The Arab youth were mostly listening. Most comments from the floor were typical: "Don't tell them what to do but support whatever they do/want." The Cliffites probably anticipated that I was going to go hard against them for their support to the mullahs in Iran in 1979, captured by their headline, "The Form—Religion, The Spirit—Revolution" (*Workers Action*, February 1979). We had polemicized against them on this question at the demonstration last Saturday. At the end of the first round, before I spoke, James Clark said the following in response to those who bring up Iran, including a young female in the audience who was wearing the *hijab* (headscarf) and asked about people connecting Iran to Egypt:

> "What they're trying to do here is create this sense of fear that there is going to be this 'Islamist' imposition on the revolution....
>
> "We need to know why that particular argument is being made about Iran. We should know that while the outcome of the Iranian revolution was shifted by the early 1980s, it nevertheless kicked out the Shah, and actually was a pole for anti-imperialism in the region for a long time. There are still a lot of people, whether we agree with them or not, who look to Iran as an alternative to the situation that exists in the other parts of the Arab world. I'm not endorsing Iran as an alternative, but we need to know that that is a particular perspective that does exist, and that there is some popular support for what exists there, and that there are debates inside Iran about that....
>
> "We need to be clear when we're having a discussion about this particular movement: when you attempt to compare it with Iran in 1979, in most cases it's been an attempt to create fear about Islam and the Muslim community and the participation of the [Muslim] Brotherhood in a popular revolution."

My intervention was the third-to-last. I started with Iran, making the point that the mullah-led "revolution" wiped out an entire generation of leftists—it massacred leftists, women and homosexuals, contrary to how the speaker depicted it. To the youth, I pointed out the need to learn lessons from history and a crucial lesson is that workers and radical youth need to fight independently of any capitalist politicians and religious forces. This means saying down with Mubarak, opposing ElBaradei and the Muslim Brotherhood and fighting for workers revolution. I lifted the issue of *Socialist Worker* on Egypt and said that there was not a single word of opposition to ElBaradei or to the Muslim Brotherhood. I noted the I.S. line on Iran 1979 and contrasted it to ours, encapsulated in our slogan: "Down with the Shah! Don't bow to Khomeini! For workers revolution in Iran!" I ended on the need to learn the experiences of the Russian Revolution.

After, the I.S. was quick to applaud the nationalism expressed by the only young Arab who intervened, who said (in response to me) that it is not about workers but about Arab people who have found a way to express themselves after so much suffering. The speaker representing ElBaradei's organization also spoke of Iran in his concluding remarks, saying that that "revolution" was driven by ideology but the Egyptian revolution is driven by people. Clark concluded by saying that in Canada we need to find out what the obstacles are (Canadian government) and fight them (sign petitions).

We engaged the Arab youth once the meeting ended. I was speaking to a group of Arabs about the need to oppose the Muslim Brotherhood and to create a workers party that will fight for socialist revolution. The usual response was that the Muslim Brotherhood has changed, that there are many tendencies within it and that the fundamentalists do not dominate it. I said that the mullahs in Iran did not start killing leftists right away; they waited until they were sufficiently strong. They were open to discussing with me, particularly because I emphasized the need to learn from past defeats. The key point needs to be repeated to these youth: anything other than working-class independence necessarily brings defeat.■

AFP

**Mansoura, Egypt: Textile workers in Nile Delta industrial zone demand better conditions, February 14.**

# Zimbabwe: Hands Off Leftists, Trade Unionists!

*The following joint statement was issued by the Spartacist League/Britain and Spartacist South Africa, sections of the International Communist League, on February 27.*

The Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B) and Spartacist South Africa (SSA) condemn the arrests on 19 February of some 52 trade unionists, students, workers and activists attending a meeting of the International Socialist Organisation of Zimbabwe. We vehemently protest the fact that these men and women were arrested in a raid on a lecture in Harare by police and were detained and tortured. Outrageously, they now face treason charges, which can carry the death penalty, for the simple reason that they organised a meeting in solidarity with the mass mobilisations that overthrew the dictators Mubarak and Ben Ali in Egypt and Tunisia. These arrests are a blatant attempt to suppress protest and strike fear into left organisations who oppose the government. It is in the direct interests of the working class to oppose this naked act of state repression.

As Marxists, the Spartacist League/Britain opposes the sanctions and other machinations practiced by the racist British ruling class against Zimbabwe. From the time of Cecil Rhodes' bloody quest to establish a "British Africa" from Cairo to the Cape, to the racist "independent" Ian Smith government, to the sanctions against Zimbabwe today, imperialist Britain never hesitated to use bloody force to assert its control and was responsible for the deaths of thousands of black Africans killed during the independence struggle in Zimbabwe.

The present British government led by David Cameron and the Labour regimes that preceded it couldn't care less what the Robert Mugabe regime does to workers and peasants. Their only concern is that the enormous wealth that is extracted from the exploitation of black labour continues to flow into the coffers of the City of London and Wall Street.

As revolutionary internationalists in South Africa, the dominant regional economic power, SSA fights for solidarity by the South African workers movement with its class brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe and throughout the region. In particular, we fight for the workers to vigorously oppose the South African government's harassment and threat of impending deportations against hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwean immigrants; we demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

We demand the immediate release of the detainees in Zimbabwe and the dropping of all charges.■

*Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forum*

## Uprisings Rock Tunisia, Egypt—Capitalist Dictatorships Remain

### Only Workers Revolution Can Liberate the Masses!

**TORONTO**

(416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

**Saturday, March 12, 7 p.m.**
OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)
252 Bloor Street West, Room 5170
(at St. George subway)

## Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

**VANCOUVER**

**Wednesday, March 16, 6:30 p.m.**
**The Fraud of Capitalist Democracy:**
**Break with Pro-Imperialist NDP!**
**Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**
UBC SUB, Room 42V
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

**TORONTO**

**Wednesday, March 23, 7 p.m.**
**Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!**
Room 2281
OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)
252 Bloor Street West
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Visit the ICL Web Site: **www.icl-fi.org**

# Partisan Defense Committee

## CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

# 25th Annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners

Cainmo.com

WV Photo

**Left: American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier. Right: Former Black Panther Party spokesman and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal.**

The Partisan Defense Committee held its 25th annual Holiday Appeal to raise money for its stipend program for class-war prisoners and their families. Benefits were held in Chicago, New York and Toronto, and funds also were raised in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. Nearly $10,000 was collected, after expenses. All proceeds from the Holiday Appeals go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not charity but an elementary act of solidarity with those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist oppression and imperialist depredation. The Holiday Appeals' stipend program revives a tradition initiated by the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Communist Party and the ILD's first secretary (1925-28). Over the last 25 years, the PDC has provided stipends to over 30 prisoners, including eight union militants, on three continents.

This year's meetings again highlighted the case of America's foremost class-war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was falsely convicted of killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981 and sentenced to death for his political beliefs. Though his frame-up conviction was upheld, Mumia's death sentence was overturned in 2001. In the latest threat to his life, the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia last November heard oral arguments on whether or not to reinstate the death penalty; it has yet to rule on the case (see "Federal Appeals Court: D.A. Demands Mumia's Execution" *WV* No. 969, 19 November 2010).

Along with Mumia, the PDC benefits honored 16 other class-war prisoners: Jamal Hart, Mumia's son, who was targeted for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father and sentenced in 1998 to 15 1/2 years without parole on bogus firearms possession charges; American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier, who has spent more than 35 years in prison for his activism on behalf of this country's oppressed native peoples; eight MOVE members (Chuck, Michael, Debbie, Janet, Janine, Delbert, Eddie and Phil Africa) who are in their 33rd year of prison for the "crime" of surviving a massive cop assault on their Philadelphia home in 1978; Jaan Laaman and Thomas Manning, the last of the anti-imperialist activists still in prison from the Ohio 7, which took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism in the late 1970s and early '80s; former Black Panther Party supporters Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation against the Panthers, framed up and languishing behind bars for 40 years; and Hugo Pinell, a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing.

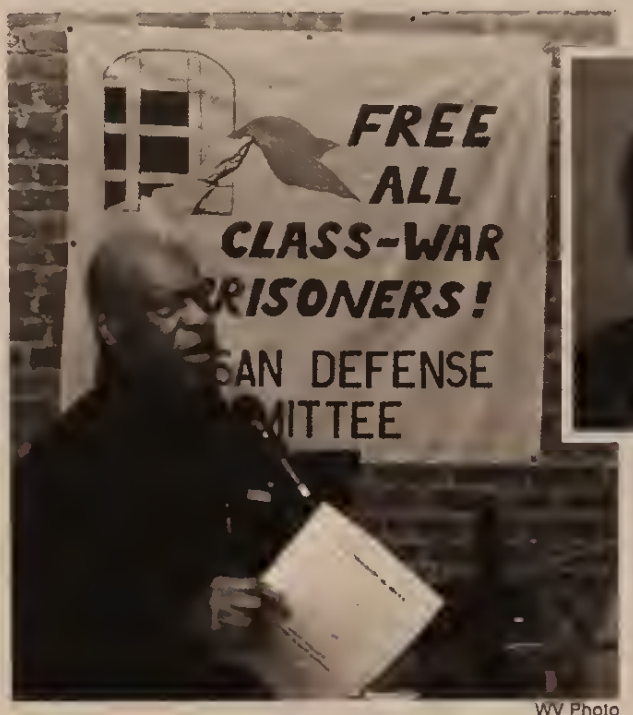
In 2010, the PDC added to the list of stipend recipients 71-year-old leftist lawyer Lynne Stewart, who is serving ten years in prison for the "crime" of vigorously representing her client (see article below). At the New York Holiday Appeal, Ralph Poynter, her husband, spoke on her behalf and described the ordeal she is going through.

The benefits heard greetings from Mumia, who noted that "the PDC is on the right side of history." He also thanked the PDC for being there "for all of us," including his son. Greetings were also received from other stipend recipients, including Michael Africa, who wrote that "to have sustained this type of support for 25 years is a testament to the commitment of The Partisan Defense Committee to those who stand up against the government agents of repression."

We urge *WV* readers to support the work of the PDC. Become a sustaining contributor to help drive the work of the PDC forward. Contributions can be sent to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.■

## Vindictive Transfer to Texas Prison

# Free Lynne Stewart Now!




WV Photo

lynnestewart.org

**Ralph Poynter read greetings from wife Lynne Stewart (inset) at New York City PDC Holiday Appeal Benefit, January 21.**

Last December, radical lawyer Lynne Stewart was transferred to FMC Carswell prison in Fort Worth, Texas. The government vindictively denied her request to be sent to a prison in Connecticut, instead locking her up more than 1,000 miles away from her family and core of supporters in New York. Known for her decades-long defense of Black Panthers, radical leftists and others reviled by the capitalist state, Lynne Stewart was incarcerated for zealously defending her client, an Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s.

Stewart, along with her interpreter Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar, was convicted in February 2005 of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism and to defraud the U.S. government. What constituted "material support" was Stewart's ***statement*** to a Reuters reporter that her client urged his supporters in the Islamic Group to reconsider their cease-fire with the Mubarak dictatorship. As we wrote at the time of the conviction in *WV* No. 842 (18 February 2005): "The verdict gives the government a green light to prosecute lawyers for the alleged crimes of their clients, thereby shooting the basic right to counsel to hell.... And if nobody can get a lawyer to zealously defend him from prosecution, then fundamental liberties, from the right to a trial and an attorney, to even the right of free speech and assembly, are choked."

Stewart was originally sentenced to 28 months in prison. On 15 July 2010, federal district judge John Koeltl, who was directed by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals to resentence Stewart, more than quadrupled her original sentence. This is a loud affirmation by the Obama administration that there will be no letup in the massive attacks on democratic rights under the "war on terror." Stewart is currently appealing her conviction before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. As for her codefendants, Yousry is imprisoned on a term of 20 months while Abdel Sattar was additionally convicted of conspiracy to "kill and kidnap persons in a foreign country" and is locked away for 24 years. None of them should have been charged or spent a day in prison.

In sentencing Stewart to ten years, the government is essentially seeking to impose a death sentence on this 71-year-old woman who has been battling breast cancer and chronic diseases. Her transfer to FMC Carswell places her health at even greater risk. The reality of "Federal Medical Center Carswell" prison has been extensively documented by Betty Brink, an award-winning journalist with the *Fort Worth Weekly*. Brink has written numerous exposés chronicling the deaths of prisoners through "medical mistakes, substandard care and unconscionable delays" in treatment, to use the words of a former Carswell doctor. Eight prison employees have been convicted of rape and other crimes against the inmates at this women's prison.

Speaking at the January 21 New York City Partisan Defense Committee Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, Stewart's husband, Ralph Poynter, conveyed a defiant message from her: "I'm going to continue speaking out about what's wrong with this government." He had recently returned from Texas, and described the ordeal both he and Lynne went through just to be able to see each other, with prison officials forcing him to wait more than three hours to get into the visiting room. Poynter thanked the PDC—which recently added Stewart to its monthly stipend program—for continuing to defend her when some liberals abandoned her cause. He also read Lynne's greetings to the event, in which she roundly denounced the FBI persecution of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, pro-Palestinian activists and other leftists (see "FBI Infiltration Exposed" *WV* No. 973, 4 February):

> "We stand strong with the resisters who elect not to become part of the same prosecution team that has terrorized the world. Now the so-called Department of Justice (ha!) has decided to focus on support groups of the world's peoples and also on ecoterrorism. Why? Because they can! It sends a message to the people that it's dangerous; don't join, don't resist. That message once again must be shouted down, first by the resisters who will go to jail and second by us, the movement who must support them by always filling those cold marble courtrooms to show our solidarity and speaking out so that their sacrifice is constantly remembered."

The defense of Stewart and her co-defendants is an elementary duty for socialist opponents of U.S. imperialism. Yet in their capitulation to "respectable" bourgeois liberals who sought to separate Stewart's defense from that of her co-defendants, Workers World Party, Socialist Action and the Party for Socialism and Liberation have abandoned the defense of Yousry and Abdel Sattar, refusing to raise the call for their freedom. National Lawyers Guild attorney Liz Fink, who quit the legal team just days before Stewart's resentencing, filed court papers that despicably attempted to exonerate Stewart by framing up Yousry! The prosecution seized on this in the resentencing to mock the defense team. Stewart, to her credit, directed the defense attorney to reply that those were Fink's words, not Stewart's.

Lynne Stewart must not become another forgotten person locked up in this country's vast prison system. The government vendetta against her and the other class-war prisoners is intended to intimidate and silence opponents of racist oppression, capitalist exploitation and imperialist war. It is in the vital interest of the labor movement and all defenders of civil liberties to demand immediate freedom for Lynne Stewart, Mohamed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar.

The PDC has contributed to Stewart's legal defense fund and encourages others to do the same. Send donations to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean Street,

# Work Among Women...

*(continued from poge 2)*

of the Union of Soviet Republics as a whole....

First of all, we shall consider those methods directed toward the economic liberation of women. In this sphere measures must be used for raising the qualifications of women's labour, for combating unemployment and for the organisation of industrial artels [cooperative associations]. With the aim of acquainting the working women of the East with industrial methods, special trade and factory schools have been organised. In certain cases these schools are conducted with women's clubs and schools....

But the measures described represent only one side of the activities of the Women's Department. Side by side with its efforts to raise the cultural level of the women of the East, the Women's Department is carrying on the extensive work of implanting the elements of culture in the minds of the Eastern Women, and attracting them into community work. The methods used in this work are many and various. First of all, as a means of combating the high mortality and social diseases so prevalent in the national republics, and the various ancient customs physically disabling women and children, the Women's Department has organised a chain of medical stations, maternity homes, children's consultations, creches, etc., and is carrying on a wide propaganda of sanitation and hygienic information. Special attention is also directed to such survivals of barbarism as the marriage of minors, the wearing of veils, the binding of women in childbirth, etc. In addition to these forms of direct help to the backward population of the Eastern borderlands, instituted by the organs of the Commissariat of Health, the Department for the Protection of Mothers and Infants, and the Commissariat of Social Insurance, the Women's Department has devoted no less attention to the combating of national ignorance. Along with the various medical and children's institutions, the Women's Department has tried to develop a chain of educational institutions. Special efforts have been made in the direction of liquidating illiteracy and in increasing the attendance of girls at the Soviet schools....

As experience has proved in Azerbaidjan, the women's clubs attain great popularity and hold great promise for development among the Eastern women. One inestimable advantage of the clubs is that they attract even the most backward and apathetic women, who are unconsciously drawn into community work, and thus the influence of the club is extended far beyond its circle of membership....

No small part in supporting the work of the educational institutions is played by the Press. Nine newspapers are published in the Soviet East which contain special pages devoted to the needs of the working women of the East. In Turkestan a special paper for women is published, and in Azerbaidjan and Georgia there are two women's journals, *Jenshina No Vostok* (The Woman of the East) and *Nash Put* (Our Path). All of these organs are printed in the native language so that the local women may understand them.

Another form of cultural activity which should be noted is the question of women's rights. The first task of the Women's Department in this field is to inform the native population of the decrees of the Soviet Government establishing complete equality of the sexes, the protection of mothers and infants, and the protection of women in industry. The second task is to stimulate the women to make use of the rights which have been secured to them and to draw them into work in the capacity of assessors, advocates, judges, ete., with the aim of doing away with all the barbaric survivals in the realm of women's rights and position. The best means of attaining this, in addition to widespread propaganda through the Press and platform, is through the organisation of a series of legal bureaux connected with the clubs or the Women's Department, to which women may turn for advice and protection in cases of infringement of their rights by their husbands or fathers; the arrangement of special public trials from time to time and the staging of mock trials for the consideration of matters connected with the local convention of marriage and family relations.... This work must, however, be preceded by a certain amount of political education. The institution of delegates is the instrument for carrying on political education among the wide non-party masses of women. The women delegate meetings should bring together the working women, the peasant women and the housekeepers, and at the present time when the solution of the national question requires the forming of ties with the peasants of the national minorities, the work among the peasant women of the countries of the East must be given first consideration....

The chief task of the delegate meetings both in the separate political campaigns and in the general non-party conferences is to draw the women into the government, trade union, co-operative and party structure. The Women's Department endeavours to have women included on the election tickets to all Soviet organs, and particularly to the village Soviets, the volost Congresses, the Volost Central Executive Committees, and the town Soviets. With the aim of increasing the activities of the members elected to the Soviets the Women's Department should bring up at their meetings questions having to do with the family, and the social and economic position of the Oriental women. Those delegates who are not members of the Soviet must be urged to participate in the discussions on these questions.

In addition to drawing the women of the East into government organs, it is also necessary to increase the activities of women in trade unions, and to attract the peasant and proletarian women into consumers' co-operatives.

It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of the phase of the work of the Women's Department that has just been indicated. The participation of Oriental women in active, constructive work will advance the Communist movement just as far as their backwardness and apathy have held it back. Furthermore, the practical work in Soviet institutions and social organisations means the gradual separation of the most conscious and dependable women from among the backward women of the East, and these women swell the ranks of the Communist Party and increase the number of active builders of the new life. And among the remaining masses, the work in the capacity of delegates or practical workers serves to awaken them to the decrepit condition of the Oriental social forms and customs, which is the first step to their complete support of the activities of the Soviet government. Not until all the hundreds of thousands of women in the East have been thus awakened, can our work among them be considered successful. Under present conditions the work among the Eastern women occupies a very prominent place. The attention of all the enemies and friends of Soviet Russia in other countries is rivetted on this work. The former observe the awakening of the East with alarm, but the latter are carefully noting the ways and means applied by the Communist Party in order to make use of the experience of the Russian Communist Party in their own countries, after the imperialistic and colonial system has been brought to an end.■

International Institute of Social History

**Photo published in 1926 shows trial in Tajikistan, Soviet Central Asia, where woman accuses her husband of abuse. According to original caption, the female judge was "the first to remove her headscarf after the [Russian] Revolution."**

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Brooklyn, New York 11216. Letters can be mailed to: Lynne Stewart, #53504-054, FMC Carswell, Federal Medical Center, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127.■

## Support Fight to Free Private Bradley Manning

AP

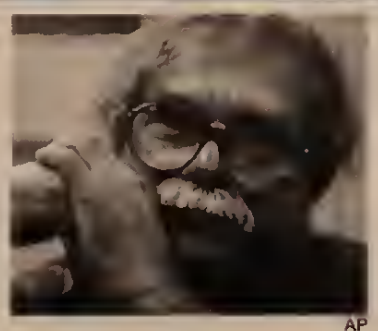
The release by WikiLeaks of some 250,000 State Department cables has provoked a vicious campaign of retaliation by the rulers of U.S. imperialism against both WikiLeaks and Army Private Bradley Manning, who is accused of leaking secret material. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who has been held under house arrest in Britain since mid December, faces patently trumped-up accusations of "rape" and "sexual molestation" in Sweden. On February 24, a British court ordered his extradition, a decision Assange is fighting. Manning is being held under torturous conditions of solitary confinement at the U.S. Marine brig in Quantico, Virginia.

Manning incurred Washington's wrath when a video of a U.S. war crime in Baghdad was posted last April by WikiLeaks. It showed an Apache helicopter gunning down and killing at least 12 people, including two Reuters journalists, as the pilots gloated over the carnage. Manning is a courageous individual who—if he was, indeed, the source of the leaks—performed a laudable service by lifting, however slightly, the veil of secrecy and lies that shrouds the imperialists' machinations.

Manning was put on "suicide watch," meaning that he was stripped of all his clothes except his underwear, and his glasses were taken away, leaving him in "essential blindness," as he put it. He is now under "prevention of injury watch." He is given no sheet or pillow and is confined to his cell for 23 hours a day. Even his one hour of exercise is done in solitary. Guards check on him every five minutes and his cell is constantly lit, including when he tries to sleep. A 24 January Amnesty International report stated: "Manning is classed as a 'maximum custody' detainee, despite having no history of violence or disciplinary offences in custody. This means he is shackled at the hands and legs during all visits and denied opportunities to work, which would allow him to leave his cell."

Workers and the oppressed throughout the world must champion the cause of Private Manning and demand his immediate freedom. The Partisan Defense Committee has contributed to Bradley Manning's defense and encourages others to do the same. Send checks earmarked "Manning defense" to: The Courage to Resist, 484 Lake Park Avenue #41, Oakland, CA 94610.■

## Parole Denied for Puerto Rican Independence Fighter
## Free Oscar López Rivera!



AP

*We reprint below a Februory 12 letter from the Portison Defense Committee to the U.S. Parole Commission demanding the release of Puerto Ricon politicol prisoner Oscor López Rivero. López Rivera was denied parole on February 18 and remains incarcerated in the federal prison in Terre Houte, Indiona.*

The Partisan Defense Committee joins those across the country and around the world calling for the release of Oscar López Rivera. Mr. López Rivera is a principled and courageous political prisoner who was convicted of seditious conspiracy in 1981 for struggling for the independence of his native Puerto Rico. After moving to the mainland as a youth, he was drafted into the Army where he served with distinction. He became a well-respected community activist in Chicago, where he fought for bilingual education and an end to anti-Latino discrimination in education and public utilities.

Mr. López Rivera has now been incarcerated for nearly three decades, subjected to the oppressive conditions in maximum security prisons in Marion, IL, and then Florence, CO. He has described his situation as being enclosed like a zoo animal in a cell eight feet wide by nine feet long for an average of 22 hours a day. This cruelty must end now.

In 1999 Mr. López Rivera was one of many Puerto Rican political prisoners who was offered conditional clemency by then President Bill Clinton. But he rejected the chance to reduce his sentence out of solidarity with Carlos Alberto Torres and Marie Haydée Beltrán Torres, two of his *compoñeros* who were not included in the clemency offer.

As has become the norm for the continued incarceration of political prisoners, Mr. López Rivera has been accused of showing no "remorse" or "contrition." Mr. López Rivera has no reason to apologize for his part in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. The people of Puerto Rico have every right to demand an end to the more than a century of colonial oppression meted out by the United States of America. We demand that Oscar López Rivera be released immediately and unconditionally.■

# For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Tuition Hikes and Budget Cuts!

## Britain

AP

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## Defend Student Protesters!

**London: Cops assaulted protesters on same day House of Commons voted to impose university fee hikes, December 9.**

*The following article is reprinted from* Workers Hammer *No. 213 (Winter 2010-11), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.*

In the final months of 2010 the country was rocked by furious student protests against the Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition government's attacks on university education. Tuition fees for students at England's universities will be allowed to rise to £9,000 [$14,500], three times the existing level, while university budgets have been slashed by 40 per cent. The education maintenance allowance, a mis-



erable payment of up to £30 per week on which seven out of ten college students depend, is being scrapped. The anger among students in universities and colleges exploded on the streets on 10 November 2010, when some 50,000 students marched in London against the new legislation. A section of the demonstration broke away and briefly occupied Tory [Conservative Party] headquarters, chanting "Tory scum" and vowing: "This is only the beginning." In the weeks to follow, students occupied campuses in several cities and mobilised in their thousands in London on December 9, the day of the vote on university fees in the House of Commons.

Tory prime minister David Cameron and his Liberal Democrat coalition partners narrowly won the vote, despite a rebellion among Liberal MPs [Members of Parliament]. Having pledged before the election to oppose any rise in tuition fees, the Liberal Democrats are now hated and the party leader is derided on demonstrations with the chant "Nick Clegg, we know you—you're a f---ing Tory too!" Despite the fact that it was a Labour government that introduced student fees in 1998, Labour MPs on this occasion voted against the Con-Dem fee increase.

The December 9 demonstration saw thousands of students, from universities, schools and colleges, marching to London's Parliament Square. Despite a gargantuan police operation on the city streets that evening, students in Regent Street chanced upon the Rolls-Royce carrying Prince Charles and his wife Camilla sitting in traffic. Demonstrating more apparent sense of British history than the schools might be expected to provide, protesters recalled the fate of Charles I and chanted "Off with their heads!" Students spattered the royal car with paint and seemingly gave the Duchess a poke in the ribs while they were at it.

The police, who came under heavy criticism for not protecting the heir to the throne, and previously for the fact that students got into the Tory Party headquarters, are now carrying out a witch hunt against protesters. Hundreds of students have been arrested and the numbers continue to rise. Outrageously, on January 12 an 18-year-old protester, Edward Woollard, was jailed for 32 months for throwing a fire extinguisher from the roof of the Tory building, hitting *nobody*. Criminal charges remain against many of the other demonstrators. *Free Edward Woollard! Drop all charges against student protesters!*

Sentencing Woollard, judge Geoffrey Rivlin said those who "indulge in serious violence must expect a lengthy sentence." For students who are new to political protest, lesson number one is that the good judge's words do not apply to the police, the actual source of serious violence on the demonstrations. The police "kettled" protesters for hours in freezing conditions, terrorised protesters by lunging at them on horseback and knocked student Alfie Meadows unconscious on December 9, causing life-threatening brain injuries. That same evening Jody McIntyre, a young protester, was yanked from his wheelchair by four riot cops and dragged across the street.

Getty

**Edward Woollard, arriving at London court on November 24, received 32-month prison sentence for role in student protest.**

Terror and violence is routine for the police, who killed Ian Tomlinson during the April 2009 protests against the G20 summit; who executed Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes on the Tube [subway] in 2005 in the name of the racist "war on terror" and who daily harass black and Asian youth using "stop and search" powers. The police are at the core of the capitalist state—which also includes the courts, prisons and military—the purpose of which is to maintain through violence the system of exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie.

Student organisations are building for demonstrations against student fees called for January 29 in London and Manchester, which are backed by some of the country's largest unions, including the civil service Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union, Unite and the GMB [general union]. As revolutionary Marxists, we fight for free, good quality education for all! For open admissions and a cost-of-living allowance for students! The question is how to get this. The money and resources exist for funding of schools, university education, hospitals and other infrastructure that is being gutted, but to seize that wealth requires breaking the power of the bourgeoisie. The Spartacist League/Britain intervenes into these protests with the understanding that the attacks on education, as well as attacks on working people, racism and exploitation, are endemic to the capitalist system. We seek to win students to our programme for the overturn of that system through socialist revolution.

### What Program to Fight Budget Cuts?

The coalition government's budget cuts amount to a breathtaking attack on the living standards of working people, the poor and elderly, as well as youth. Across Europe and in the U.S., the capitalist ruling classes are seizing on the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression to slash jobs and to demand massive concessions on working hours, wages and pensions. Any capitalist government in Britain—whether Labour, Tory and/or Liberal Democrat—will try to restore the "health" of the system by bleeding working people; while of course cuts in company profits and the stratospheric bonuses paid to bank executives are off limits. At the mere suggestion that a "mansion tax" be imposed, Blairite Peter Mandelson cried, "Surely the rich have suffered enough!" Indeed, some of Britain's richest have been reduced to asking for handouts from the state: it recently came to light that in 2004 the Queen turned to a public fund earmarked for "schools, hospitals and low-income families" to help her in the onerous task of heating Buckingham Palace! In these hard times, Her Majesty cut corners by eliminating Christmas luncheon for the palace staff.

What's needed is a class-struggle fight to defend the working class and poor against these attacks. Winning decent healthcare and quality education for the working class, including its black and Asian minority components, requires hard struggle against the capitalist class, a handful of people whose obscene wealth is gained from exploiting the working class and whose rule is reinforced by racial and other forms of social oppression. Students themselves have no social power and therefore must mobilise behind the organised working class, particularly the public sector unions, which have the social power and a vital interest in fighting against all the attacks on social services, including on state education.

But to engage the strength of the unions in an effective battle against the government's cuts requires a struggle against the pro-Labour politics of the trade union bureaucracy who are committed to defending the interests of the British capitalist rulers. What's needed is a new class-struggle leadership that will fight—in the face of capitalist austerity—for the basic needs of the working class. Forging such a leadership is key to building a revolutionary workers party.

### Refurbishing Labour's Image

The student protests have sparked a debate about the role of the trade unions in fighting the budget cuts. Len McCluskey, newly elected head of Unite, said that the students had "put the trade union movement on the spot" and that the unions "have to be preparing for battle." The aim of this "battle" is to channel discontent among students and workers into support for a Labour government. McCluskey hopes that "Ed Miliband is going to continue his welcome course of drawing a line under Labour's Blairite past" and warns that: "These are Con-Dem cuts, and this is a capitalist crisis. An attempt to blame Labour local authorities for the problem is a shortcut to splitting our movement and letting the gov-

ernment off the hook" (guardian.co.uk, 19 December 2010).

Reformist organisations such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) tail the trade union bureaucracy and share the same goal: to pressure the Labour Party—which before the general election promised cuts "deeper and tougher" than Margaret Thatcher's in the 1980s: which during 13 years in office carried out imperialist butchery in Afghanistan and Iraq and racist immigrant-bashing at home.

The SWP backed Labour in the 2010 general election and now runs the National Right to Work coalition, whose prominent slogan is "Break the Con-Dem Coalition!"—a barely disguised appeal for a Labour government (backed by the Liberal Democrats). Last June the SWP provided the Cameron government with a helpful way out of Britain's economic crisis, issuing a glossy "anti-cuts" poster titled "Why There's No Need to Slash Spending." With a series of colourful graphs and pie charts, the SWP demonstrated in regard to the deficit that "we could raise the whole of that every year," merely by taxing the rich, clamping down on tax evaders, and cutting defence spending by scrapping Trident [submarine-launched missile system] and ending the war in Afghanistan. The SWP calculates that these simple measures would bring £310 billion to Britain's coffers. Quick—someone alert David Cameron! He should be informed that he needn't throw people out of council housing, raise student fees or threaten workers' livelihoods.

In fact—as Marx and Engels explained over a century and a half ago—the capitalists and their government behave the way they do not because they are ignorant, irrational or simply mean people, but because they must pursue their class interests: maximising profits and all that this entails, which includes securing access to markets and resources through imperialist butchery abroad and war on working people and minorities at home.

Counterfire, an offshoot of the SWP, together with Workers Power and others are building several "anti-cuts" lash-ups. Despite much grief among themselves about the failure to unite into a single "anti-cuts opposition" the differences are over tactical and organisational questions, not over politics and programme. None of the competing groups has a programme for the overthrow of capitalism. Workers Power, parent of the youth group Revolution, expressed the hopes and dreams of all the Labourite left when they headlined last October: "Ed Miliband elected Labour leader by workers' votes: Now make him fight!" (Workers Power website, 2 October 2010). Ed Miliband is already fighting: he has told the compliant union leaders that he is opposed to strikes against the cuts and is appalled at the very idea of a strike in London Underground on the day of Prince William's wedding in April.

AP

**"Off with their heads!" chanted London student protesters who interrupted Prince Charles and wife Camilla's night on the town, December 9.**

Counterfire is heavily involved in the so-called "Coalition of Resistance," supported by retired Labour MP Tony Benn, darling of the reformists, plus Labour MPs John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn. Also included are Green Party MP Caroline Lucas, filmmaker Ken Loach and author Iain Banks and numerous trade union leaders including Mark Serwotka, leader of the PCS, and Bob Crow, general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union as well as Len McCluskey. The Coalition of Resistance aims not for the overthrow of capitalism but for "a radical alternative, with the level of determination shown by trade unionists and social movements in Greece and other European countries."

The mass strike waves in Greece and France last year showed the tremendous social power of the organised working class: both countries were brought to a grinding halt by mass strikes in protest against government austerity. However, these struggles were undermined by the political bankruptcy of their reformist misleaders, who accept the need for capitalist austerity, while seeking to have a say in how and where cuts should be implemented. Like their counterparts in France and Greece, the British reformists are tailing the wretched trade union bureaucracy.

Counterfire invokes the spectre of France in May 1968, "the totemic student struggle, the mark against which all others become judged" ("Where Next for the Student Revolt?", 23 December 2010). May '68 was indeed an immense social struggle ignited by student protests that resulted in mass strikes, factory occupations and demonstrations and led to a prerevolutionary situation in France. The Counterfire article can't bring itself to utter the words "socialist" or "revolution," saying instead that "the change of a whole society" was posed in France, and that this "didn't quite happen, for reasons that still provoke debate." They don't explain the reasons this "didn't quite happen." In fact, the workers and students were ***sold out*** by the reformist Communist Party leaders, who called off the strikes for a few crumbs from the capitalists' table (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 972, 21 January).

**Reformism in action: British SWP poster advises rulers how to administer the capitalist state budget.**

The Socialist Party-dominated National Shop Stewards Network has launched an "All-Britain anti-cuts campaign." The politics of the Socialist Party amount to craven reformism, notably on the state. Their position is that the police and prison guards are "workers in uniform," a flat denial of the Leninist position that the police are a core part of the armed fist of the capitalist state whose purpose is to maintain capitalist rule through repression of the working class. The Socialist Party is known on the left for pandering to chauvinism and backward consciousness. Grotesquely, these "socialists" played a leading role in the chauvinist strikes against foreign workers at the Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire in 2009 in which the slogan "British jobs for British workers" was prominent. (See "'Labourites Whitewash Chauvinist Strikes," *Workers Hammer* No. 206, Spring 2009 [reprinted in *WV* No. 937, 22 May 2009].)

Reformist politics cannot address any of the fundamental problems facing students today. These were summed up by one of a group of minority youth interviewed by the BBC's Paul Mason on the December 9 protest, who said: "We're from the slums of east London. How do they expect us to pay £9,000 for uni fees, and EMA [education maintenance allowance] was the only thing keeping us in college. What's stopping us from doing drug deals on the streets any more? Nothing." The willful neglect of education under capitalism hits hardest at the poorest in society, especially ethnic minorities, who are more likely to attend resource-starved and decrepit schools in run-down areas. An authoritative recent study into inequality in Britain showed that:

> "children from the poorest families are half as likely to achieve good GCSEs [secondary education certification exams]; black pupils of Caribbean descent are three times more likely to be excluded; four out of five young people with special needs are being bullied; between a quarter and a third of Muslim women have no qualifications."
>
> —*Guardian*, 10 October 2010

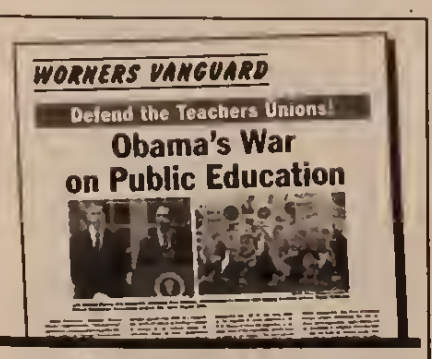
Labour's much talked about "reforms" in education amounted to a "free-market" bonanza for private companies and an insidious attack on the unions in education. Education services—from teaching to catering to building maintenance and cleaning—were outsourced to private companies. This meant many different employers operating in schools and colleges, many of whom are hostile to the existence of unions. Blair saw the teaching unions as a potential obstacle to his education "reform," and thus teachers were blamed for schools that were designated as "failing." Performance-related pay is increasingly used, supposedly to reward good results, but in fact it undermines the national pay scales and national terms and conditions negotiated by the teachers' unions. Blair's legacy also includes more "faith schools," which boost the promotion of anti-scientific religious obscurantism and creationism, and city academies which are all but exempt from local authority control and are decidedly unfriendly to the teachers' unions.

Labour's introduction of university fees in 1998 was a massive attack on students from working-class backgrounds. (Two years later the Scottish parliament reversed this in Scottish universities.) However an unprecedented number of students now attend university, in Britain and other advanced capitalist countries. University students in Britain incur huge levels of debt—estimated to average £25,000 but may be as high as £50,000 in London. And despite a vast expansion in the number of working-class students attending higher education, the class divide in education remains as wide as it was decades ago when the eleven-plus examination [for eleven-year-olds] determined that 80 per cent of the population was unfit for university.

To this day, social class is the single most important factor in determining educational achievement. The class divide persists because under capitalism the education system is tailored to favour the wealthy few. Research shows that students who live in socially deprived areas are less likely to take A-levels in subjects such as maths and science, while "children from the higher social classes were more likely to opt for subjects such as biology, further maths, English literature and languages" (independent.co.uk, 19 August 2009). In affluent areas such as London's Kensington and Chelsea, upwards of 80 per cent of children will go to university, a rate which is five times higher than children from poorer regions. Although only seven per cent of all pupils are educated in the elite "public" (private) school system, this sector produces 75 per cent of judges, 70 per cent of finance directors and 55 per cent of solicitors (independent.co.uk, 22 July 2009).

The British ruling class sees little need to educate and train working-class people beyond what is needed for the City [financial center], which in the words of *Guardian* columnist Stewart Lansley "has sucked in the pick of Britain's brightest graduates with some of the best young PhD mathematicians and physicists behind the fiendishly complex mathematical formula used to run arcane financial instruments" (guardian.co.uk, 27 August 2009).

As working people and students face the hammer blows of the capitalists, the trade union misleaders and their "socialist" lackeys look to Labour to merely mitigate the worst of the assault. This perspective has proven bankrupt over many years, including under old Labour governments in the 1960s and '70s. To begin to address the fundamental problems faced by the multiethnic working class of this country requires a party armed with a programme for socialist revolution to destroy the capitalist state root and branch and replace it with a workers state that will lay the basis for building a socialist society. For that we need a revolutionary workers party—a party like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks—which will fight for a workers government. The Spartacist League/Britain seeks to build such a party. Join us!■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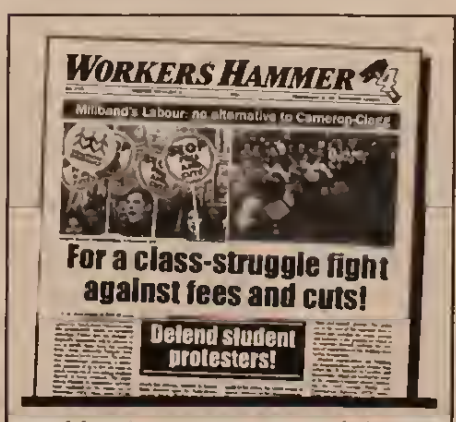


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# Wisconsin...

*(continued from page 1)*

payroll deductions for health care would be dramatically increased. Workers would be required to pay 50 percent of the contributions to the pension fund, resulting in a pay cut of 5 to 12 percent. Walker, a Republican of the reactionary Tea Party ilk, has threatened to start laying off 12,000 workers beginning this week if his bill does not pass.

"It's about the assault on labor, an assault on the working human being; to take and throw away the contract and say it's balancing the budget is bull crap," said a member of Wisconsin's American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). In short order, Scott Walker confirmed this observation. Believing, gullibly, that he was in a phone conversation with right-wing billionaire and Tea Party backer David Koch, Walker confessed to having considered planting troublemakers among the pro-union demonstrators while praising Ronald Reagan's 1981 smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers strike and destruction of the union; Walker said that this was "our" PATCO "moment." Indeed, the impact of such legislation is demonstrated in Indiana, where all collective bargaining for public unions was banned six years ago. Since that time, as the governor of that state brags, union membership for state workers has nose-dived by ***90 percent***.

There will either be class struggle or defeat. In his phone call with the ersatz David Koch, Governor Walker articulated

Sohner/Columbus Dispatch

**Columbus, February 22: Protest at Statehouse against bill to outlaw collective bargaining for Ohio state workers.**

a strategy of simply letting the protests play out. What is needed is hard class struggle to defeat this union-busting attack. The massive, hugely popular Madison protests show that there is widespread outrage over the savage cutbacks and that workers are ready to fight.

On February 21, the South Central Federation of Labor (SCFL), composed of delegates from 97 public and private sector union locals representing 45,000 workers in Madison and southern Wisconsin, unanimously passed a motion stating: "The SCFL endorses a general strike, possibly for the day Walker signs his 'budget repair bill'." In another motion, SCFL rejected any bargaining concessions on wages, benefits and union rights. At the same time, SCFL president Jim Cavanaugh was quick to explain that the group's support for a "general strike" was just advisory: "We're just a support organization, and the actual local unions would have to decide if they wanted to escalate things to the point of a strike." Recommendations will not do the trick. The Wisconsin labor movement needs to prepare for statewide strike action if this attempt to gut the unions is to be defeated.

But the Wisconsin public union tops have centered their whole strategy on pressuring the capitalist politicians to "compromise" by merely deleting the portions of Walker's bill that gut their collective bargaining rights. Blathering about the need to "share the sacrifice," these labor lieutenants of capital have pledged their ***support*** to all the wage and benefit givebacks Walker wants to wring from the unions. On February 21, the teachers union bureaucracy called off the school sick-outs—themselves a weak form of protest that sets individual teachers up for victimization.

It is necessary to defend each and every gain that the labor movement has won—from wages and benefits to pensions to the right for unions to exist. But that cannot be done by playing by the bosses' rules. Beginning with the very right to form unions, all the major gains that labor has wrested from the bosses in the past century were once themselves "illegal" by the norms of bourgeois "law and order." The class-struggle methods through which our rights were won—from massive picket lines to factory occupations to hot-cargoing struck goods—were also "illegal," and are today! Hard-fought strikes galvanize the rest of the labor movement and, when victorious, tear up the bosses' anti-strike laws and injunctions.

With similar restrictions and cuts against labor on the legislative agenda in many states (see article, page 1), the showdown in Wisconsin—the first state to legalize public sector unions, in the 1950s—has riveted the attention of workers nationally and internationally. In the U.S., private sector unions have mobilized in force alongside public sector workers around the Midwest. From New Jersey to Oklahoma and elsewhere, labor has rallied against similar anti-union legislation. In Columbus, Ohio, over 5,000 trade-union demonstrators filled Capitol Square.

With the global economic crisis grinding down working people and the oppressed throughout the world, mobilizations against exploitation and oppression quickly resound. Many in Wisconsin have identified their struggles with those of the working masses of Egypt, with some carrying signs denouncing Walker as a Mubarak-type dictator. In turn, messages of solidarity have been sent to Wisconsin from Egyptian workers and activists.

In Wisconsin, Democratic Party politicians have heavily promoted the protests to burnish their image as "friends of labor" in Midwest swing states. Fourteen Democratic state senators fled across the border to Illinois in a maneuver to deprive Walker of a quorum to ram the bill through the Republican-controlled state legislature. President Barack Obama has claimed to sympathize with public workers, asserting that it would be wrong "to vilify them or to suggest that somehow all these budget problems are due to public employees." That takes a lot of chutzpah from an imperialist Commander-in-Chief whose assaults on the United Auto Workers, relentless attacks on teachers unions, and two-year wage freeze on federal employees have set the stage for the current round of state and local attacks on public sector unions.

In distributing *Workers Vanguard* to the Madison protesters, our comrades have warned against any illusions in the Democrats. No less than the Republicans, the Democratic Party is a capitalist party and the class enemy of workers, black people, immigrants and the oppressed. While the Tea Party reactionaries want to smash the unions outright in order to extract the maximum concessions, the Democrats pretend to be "friends" of labor to better hoodwink the workers and maintain labor "peace," while extracting the same economic concessions.

The union tops—a component of the Democratic Party—are fully committed to the system of capitalist exploitation. In the private sector, these types have for decades agreed to the savage cutbacks of wages and benefits and the job-slashing attacks deemed by the bosses to be vital to the health of corporate America. This class collaboration has fueled the steep decline of the once-powerful industrial unions, which were built in the giant class battles of the 1930s. Now public sector unions face the same attacks along with the threat of a nationwide spate of "right to work" legislation to assure the withering of their union membership. In short, the union bureaucracy's subordination of the class struggle to the dictates of the bosses has set the stage for those forces on the right that seek the destruction of public sector unions.

The union tops are fond of portraying labor struggles as a fight to maintain the "middle class," thus obscuring the class divide in this country. In turn, the Tea Party types portray their struggle as a fight to maintain the middle class against encroachments of the labor movement. In reality, what is at issue is the inherent class conflict of workers against their capitalist exploiters.

Walker's bill exempts firefighters and cops from the cutbacks, supposedly in the interest of public safety. Firemen, who have joined the demonstrations at the Capitol, are workers whose job it is to save lives and prevent destruction. The cops and prison guards are not workers. They are the hired thugs of the capitalist rulers, front-line enforcers of the racist capitalist "justice" system. Marxists understand that far from being "neutral," the capitalist state is at bottom nothing more than an apparatus of violence—the cops, army, courts and prisons—for enforcing the bosses' class rule. This is no mystery to the bourgeois politician Walker, who has threatened to call out the National Guard to quell militant labor action. But the public sector unions like AFSCME have recruited cops and prison guards, deadly enemies of the working class, into the unions by the tens of thousands. Cops, prison guards out of the trade-union movement!

In channeling the workers' anger into the dead end of bourgeois pressure politics, the union bureaucrats are aided by a host of reformist "socialist" outfits. Groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Socialist Alternative (SAlt) and the Party for Socialism and Liberation have uncritically cheered the Madison protests while upholding the losing strategy of pressuring the Democrats to "fight the right" and "tax the rich" to balance the budget. In a February 19 statement on its Web site, SAlt cravenly wrote, "We can't rely on the Democratic Party to maintain a principled stand unless they feel the fire of the movement spreading underneath them. After all, would the Senate Democrats have even taken their stand if the working people of Wisconsin hadn't risen up in the first place?" For the ISO, the demonstrations have "transformed U.S. politics in a way that won't disappear, whatever happens with Walker's legislation." Or as Jesse Jackson put it in addressing a crowd at the state Capitol, "This is a Martin Luther King moment, this is a Gandhi moment." The continuing miseries of black Americans and of the Indian masses show that this is not the way forward.

AP

**PATCO air traffic controllers union leaders dragged off to jail during 1981 strike.**

Labor needs a fighting leadership that will break the chains that tie the unions to the capitalist Democrats—a class-struggle leadership that understands that the whole capitalist system of racism, war and exploitation must be thrown on the garbage heap of history. This is part of the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government and for a socialist egalitarian society in which those who labor will rule. Speaking of the victorious 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, which were key to establishing the Teamsters as an industrial union, Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon noted in *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944):

> "Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity. Consequently, they expected from the start that the union would have to fight for its right to exist; that the bosses would not yield any recognition to the union, would not yield any increase of wages or reduction of the scandalous hours without some pressure being brought to bear. Therefore they prepared everything from the point of view of class war. They knew that power, not diplomacy, would decide the issue. Bluffs don't work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight."■


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# Public Workers...

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capitalist rulers around the world, as workers are being forced to pay for the global Great Recession. The British *Economist* (6 January), reveling in the carnage, reported:

> "Many governments (for example in Ireland, Greece and Spain) are cutting public-sector pay. Others (for example in Japan and America) are freezing it. Greece is increasing the retirement age from 58 to 63 and making it possible to fire public servants. Britain is cutting government departments by as much as a quarter, and is reviewing pensions.
>
> "In the United States several rising Republican governors are keen to turn the short-term struggle over pay and benefits into a bigger battle about trade-union power. New Jersey's Chris Christie and Minnesota's Tim Pawlenty have both eagerly taken on the new 'privileged class' of public sector workers."

In Europe, the capitalist offensive has been met with defensive, at times massive, class struggle. Most recently, amid a nationwide general strike on February 23, demonstrators protesting government austerity in Greece were attacked by riot cops firing tear gas projectiles. But as we wrote in "Ireland Ravaged by European Economic Crisis" (*WV* No. 970, 3 December 2010), "the effectiveness of the workers' struggles has been hampered by the political bankruptcy of the workers' reformist leadership, who accept the inevitability of capitalist austerity while seeking to soften the blows."

Getty

**Line for Washington, D.C., jobs fair, May 2010. Some 6.2 million people are classified as long-term unemployed, taking a record average of 37 weeks to find work.**

In the U.S., tens of thousands of teachers and other public workers have mobilized in sick-outs and protest actions in response to a union-busting bill pushed by Wisconsin Republican governor Scott Walker, which would amount to a frontal assault on public unions' very right to exist (see article, page 1). With Republican lawmakers mounting similar plans in Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana and elsewhere, Gerald McEntee, the president of AFSCME, which shelled out nearly $90 million for Democratic Party candidates in the November elections, complained, "I see this as payback for the role we played in the 2010 elections."

It is indeed "payback"—for the trade-union misleaders' class collaboration, which has sapped the fighting power of organized labor by chaining it to the parties of the capitalist class enemy. No less than the Republicans, the policies of the purported "friend of labor" Democrats are determined by the capitalist class. Those Democrats who survived the midterm "shellacking," largely thanks to the efforts of the trade-union bureaucracy, are not to be outdone in "balancing the budget" out of the wages, pensions and other benefits of government workers as well as savaging already threadbare social programs for the poor. New York Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo inaugurated his election with a one-year wage freeze on state workers, 900 layoffs and the promise of thousands to follow. In California, Jerry Brown celebrated his second time around in the governor's office by announcing that over three billion dollars would be cut from welfare and health care benefits for the poor, as well as $750 million from services for the disabled.

For its part, the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy couples its overwhelming fealty to the Democrats with preaching one-sided "shared sacrifice" and pushing "America First" protectionist poison. With their chauvinist appeals, these "labor lieutenants of capital" help line up working people behind U.S. imperialist interests. For America's capitalist rulers, workers are fodder for profit at home while poor, minority and working-class youth are cannon fodder abroad. The struggles of working people and minorities against capitalist exploitation and oppression cannot be divorced from opposition to all U.S. imperialist depredations.

## Busting the Unions, Starving the Poor

In racist capitalist America, the spectre of the hard-working taxpayer whose pockets are being picked to fund the "undeserving" has long been raised to shred social programs seen as benefitting black people, immigrants and the poor. Now the capitalist masters are wielding this stick against public workers unions. What's at stake is not simply the survival of these unions, many of which are made up predominantly of blacks and other minorities and women. On the line are the very lives of working people, the poor, the sick and the aged who depend on such paltry social services as this capitalist government continues to provide. There is no more vivid a snapshot of the potential impending catastrophe than Detroit.

The former Motor City, where hundreds of thousands of unionized black auto workers once had the semblance of a decent job, is now a vast urban wasteland. By some estimates, black male unemployment is nearly 65 percent. Detroit's population has sunk from 1.8 million to 850,000, with 40 percent of the city written off as "unoccupied" by the city's political masters. A year ago, an article in the *Washington Post* (3 January 2010) described conditions: "The decline of the auto industry and the nation's economic slide have left many residents here trapped, without work, in houses they can't sell, in neighborhoods where they fear for their safety, in schools that offer their children a hard road out."

While black industrial workers were the first to be written off by the bourgeoisie as a "surplus population"—their labor no longer needed to produce profits and their very lives considered dispensable—such ruin now increasingly stalks the nation. Almost 14 million people are officially unemployed, and that discounts those millions trying to scrape by with part-time jobs and the millions more who have been cast into permanent joblessness.

This crisis is the product of the workings of the anarchic system of capitalism, based on production for profit derived out of the exploitation of the working class. The obscenely wealthy capitalists appropriate the results of the workers' labor (i.e., profit) as their own, while working people are left to wonder if they will have a job tomorrow. This phenomenon was noted at the birth of industrial capitalism by Karl Marx, who described its devastating effect nearly 150 years ago in *Capital*: "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole."

AFP

**Athens, 23 February: Greek workers march during one-day general strike against public sector wage cuts and other austerity measures.**

Many workers today feel that the best they can do is to try to hold on to their jobs. But the same conditions that grind down the working class, that demoralize and set them one against the other in a fight to survive, can and will also propel the proletariat forward to unity in battle together with its allies against the capitalist class enemy. This was seen in the midst of the Great Depression in the 1930s, when, at a brief upturn in the economy, workers began to wage bitter class battles to organize industrial unions, sacrificing, if necessary, their jobs, their freedom and their very lives.

The social power of public workers is not that of industrial workers, who can directly stop the wheels of production and thus of profit from turning. But public unions include transportation, utility and other workers who provide the means and services by which the economy runs—the infrastructure vital for a modern industrial economy. For example, transit workers in metropolitan centers like New York, the San Francisco Bay Area and Chicago can cripple these financial and corporate centers.

While the bourgeois media whips up a propaganda barrage about "public outrage" against public workers unions, the truth is that if these workers waged some hard class struggle they would have plenty of allies among the unemployed, black people, immigrants and all those who have been thrown under the bus by the capitalist rulers. "Public opinion" is, in the end, determined by the ebbs and flows of the class struggle. As Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin stressed: "Whereas the liberals (and the liquidators) tell the workers: 'You are strong when you have the sympathy of "society",' the Marxist tells the workers something different, namely: 'You have the sympathy of "society" when you are strong'."

What stands in the way of the labor movement engaging in militant class struggle is the union bureaucracy. Peddling the lie that the workers have common interests with the capitalist exploiters and their state, they have allowed the industrial unions to be hacked to pieces and are lying down in the face of the war against public unions, if not actively collaborating in it. Even when forced to offer some resistance to the assaults of capitalist politicians like Wisconsin's governor Walker, the bureaucrats subordinate the workers to the capitalist Democratic Party, and most of them are willing to concede to virtually all the government's economic demands to cut wages and benefits.

## The Labor Lieutenants of the Capitalist Class

The leaders of the public unions pledge their allegiance to "balancing the budget" of the capitalist government, the executive committee of the capitalist class. AFSCME leader McEntee has promised that "Public Employees stand ready to help state and local governments get through the economic storm." Joining this chorus, a spokesman for the biggest New York State government workers union, the Civil Service Employees Association, responded to Governor Cuomo's wage freeze by stating: "It sounds like he's trying to set a tone that we need to all do our part. We don't have a problem with doing our part" (*New York Times*, 3 January).

The role of the trade-union bureaucracy was captured by Leon Trotsky, who together with V. I. Lenin was co-leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution: "The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the 'democratic' state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and especially in time of war." When the "good times" were rolling on Wall Street, the public union misleaders assisted state and local governments in holding the line on increased wages and other benefits with the promise of greater pension fund contributions—a form of deferred wages. These funds in turn became a honeypot for high-rolling bankers and hedge fund managers, in league with state pension plan managers, for some of their riskiest investments, like credit default swaps and complex mortgage securities. When these imploded, pension funds were burned. State governments, many of which underfunded pension payments, are now screaming that they are being robbed by public workers, whose average pension is about $20,000 a year. Anyone who looks can

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# Public Workers...

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see whose hand is in whose pocket.

The capitalist masters have virtually obliterated defined-benefit pensions in industry, which obligated corporations to make fixed retirement payments for private sector unions. Now they are trying to enlist these workers in the war against "greedy" public workers. An op-ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal* (4 January) titled "Labor's Coming Class War" declared:

> "The notion that Wall Street and Main Street are fundamentally at odds with one another remains a popular orthodoxy. So much so that we may be missing the first stirrings of a true American class war: between workers in government unions and their union counterparts in the private sector."

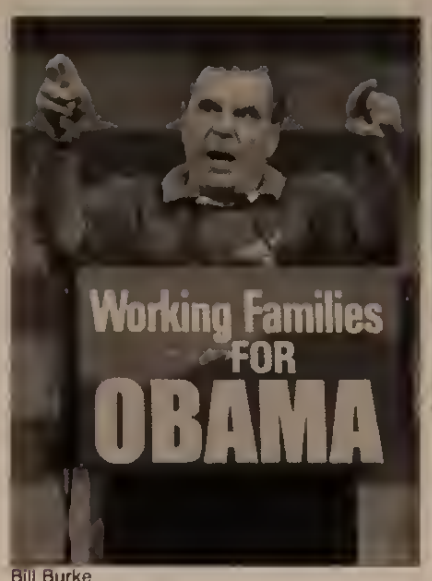
For evidence, this voice of finance capital points to Steve Sweeney, an organizer for the Ironworkers union, more than 40 percent of whose members are out of work. Sweeney is credited with "pushing for reform of state-employee pay and benefits" in his other capacity as the Democratic Party president of the New Jersey State Senate. The article goes on to gloat that New York governor Cuomo "may have found a surprising ally" in Gary LaBarbera—president of the 100,000-strong Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.

Joining business and real estate magnates in the "Committee to Save New York," which is raising millions to bankroll Cuomo's war against government unions, LaBarbera argued: "This is not about bashing public-sector unions. But without a fiscally sound environment, we will not be able to attract new businesses to the city" (*New York Times*, 9 December 2010). This is but a raw expression of the labor bureaucracy's class-collaborationist policies, which tie the fate of the workers to the fortunes of the capitalist class and its state.

In the face of a growing army of unemployed, the gutting of pensions, the lack of health care and the elimination of other social programs and benefits, the answer of the trade-union bureaucrats is to pit worker against worker in the struggle to survive. In fact, the "fiscally sound" calculations of the capitalist rulers don't simply include savaging public unions and the poor. Taking aim at *all* unions, Republican politicians in the Indiana legislature earlier this month introduced a union-busting "right to work" bill modeled on similar laws in the South, where the unionization rate is the lowest in the country.

## A Class-Struggle Program

It is in the crucible of heightening class conflict that a new workers leadership in the unions can be forged. This is not simply a question of militancy in defense of the existing unions. If the workers are to struggle not only in their own interests but in the interests of all the oppressed, there must be a hard political struggle to replace the present sellouts who sit on top of the unions. They must be replaced with workers' leaders who are able to not only win battles on the picket lines but who are also uncompromising in their dedication to the liberation of humanity from the exploitation, all-sided misery and war that are inherent to a system based on production for profit rather than human need. Striving to forge such a *class-struggle* leadership of the unions is an integral part of the fight for a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose aim is no less than doing away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery.



Bill Burke

Washington/NY Times

**Left: AFSCME president Gerald McEntee stumps for Obama candidacy, 2008. Above: Teachers union head Randi Weingarten in 2002 with union-busting New York City mayor Bloomberg.**

The very defense of the unions mandates a fight to organize the unorganized, from the mass of immigrant workers to the open shop South. To wage such a battle means fighting against the race-color caste oppression of black people, which is the bedrock of capitalist rule in this country. A class-struggle leadership of the unions would be rooted in the understanding that the fight for black freedom is inextricably tied to labor's cause and would take up the defense of foreign-born workers, demanding an end to deportations and full citizenship rights for all immigrants. It would take up the fight for free, quality health care for all, for the extension of unemployment benefits until there are jobs and for all pensions to be guaranteed by the government.

During the Great Depression and on the eve of the Second World War, Leon Trotsky wrote the Transitional Program, laying out, in Trotsky's words, "*transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." These demands are not only relevant but vital to the proletariat today.

Against the catastrophe of mass unemployment, which threatens the devastation of the working class, Trotsky called for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread the available work and for a massive program of public works. A fight to rebuild the decaying infrastructure of America—the roads, dams, subway systems, schools and hospitals—would unite private and public unions together with the unemployed in a common struggle for jobs and the rehabilitation of decent services for the population. It would also mobilize the power of labor in the interests of the ghetto and barrio poor in the rotting inner cities, striking a blow against the racial and ethnic hostilities whipped up by the rulers to divide and weaken working people.

General Motors claimed that it could no longer afford to pay union pensions and health benefits for retirees and new hires. Based on this fraud, the auto barons got bailed out. The average wages and benefits of many of the surviving union membership are on a par with those of workers at non-union plants. Earlier, the airline, steel and industrial magnates also declared bankruptcy and were assisted by the courts in ripping up union contracts. Now a proposal is being mooted to allow state governments to declare bankruptcy so that they too can cancel their "debt obligations," like the billions they owe in pensions. To expose such highway robbery by the corporations, the banks and the government, Trotsky argued that the workers demand that the capitalists open their books and "reveal to all members of society that unconscionable squandering of human labor which is the result of capitalist anarchy."

Against the swindles of the finance capitalists who control the economy, Trotsky called for the expropriation of the banks: "Only the expropriation of the private banks and the concentration of the entire credit system in the hands of the state will provide the latter with necessary actual, i.e., material resources—and not merely paper and bureaucratic resources—for economic planning." Trotsky was not talking here about the capitalist state, which exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. As he put it, "*the state-ization of the banks* will produce these favorable results only if the state power itself passes completely from the hands of the exploiters into the hands of the toilers"—i.e., a workers government.

Minnesota Historical Society

**Pickets confront scabherder during 1934 Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strike.**

## No Illusions in the Capitalist State

The trade-union bureaucracy peddles the myth that the capitalist state is "neutral" and can be made to answer the needs of the working class if purported labor-friendly Democrats are put in office. They claim that the very organization of industrial unions was due to legislation enacted by the Democratic Party government of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, rather than the hard-fought struggles of the workers.

Specifically, the labor tops point to the 1935 Wagner Act, which they claim granted industrial workers the right to organize. The Wagner Act was passed in the aftermath of three victorious citywide strikes in 1934—all of them led by communists—that led to the founding of the CIO industrial unions. It was designed to head off the organizing drive by union militants and "reds" and to set up a government mechanism to subordinate the unions to the capitalist state. As Trotsky wrote in his 1940 article, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay":

> "In the United States the trade union movement has passed through the most stormy history in recent years. The rise of the CIO is incontrovertible evidence of the revolutionary tendencies within the working masses. Indicative and noteworthy in the highest degree, however, is the fact that the new 'leftist' trade union organization was no sooner founded than it fell into the steel embrace of the imperialist state. The struggle among the tops between the old federation and the new is reducible in large measure to the struggle for the sympathy and support of Roosevelt and his cabinet."

The very leaders of the new industrial union movement, including the Stalinist Communist Party, crippled it through their support to Roosevelt. The Communists and other militants were rewarded by being driven out of the unions in the red purges of the late 1940s and early 1950s, which solidified the power of the unvarnished pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy that has since driven these unions into the ground.

Well into the second half of the 20th century, union organization of government workers was uncommon if not outright prohibited. If the 1935 Wagner Act partly acknowledged and sought to regulate organizing rights and collective bargaining in private industry, it specifically exempted public employees from the right to join unions without reprisal. FDR himself wrote that the idea of strikes against the government "by those who have sworn to support it, is unthinkable and intolerable."

In 1962, John F. Kennedy issued Executive Order 10988, granting most public sector employees the right to collectively bargain. Kennedy's order specifically prohibited strikes, as did Richard Nixon's 1969 order modifying it. In 1970, over 200,000 postal workers went on a nationwide wildcat strike. Nixon called in the military, but quickly learned you can't sort the mail with bayonets. The strike led to the formation of the American Postal Workers Union and the right to collective bargaining by postal workers. However, the ban on strikes remained and was strengthened by the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA).

The misleaders of public workers unions present the formation of their unions, too, as the result of the largesse of the Democratic Party. The son of the author of the Wagner Act, former New York City mayor Robert F. Wagner, is credited with giving city workers the right to organize in 1958. In fact, their right to organize was won in a climate of rapidly increasing militancy, beginning with a 1955 sanitation strike led by AFSCME DC 37 against autocratic Parks Commissioner Robert Moses.

A hard-won and popular strike by welfare social workers in 1965 was followed by the victorious 1966 transit strike, in which Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 leader Mike Quill tore up a court injunction ordering the strike to

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end, famously announcing on his way to jail, "The judge can drop dead in his black robes and we would not call off the strike." That strike spelled the end of the 1947 Condon-Wadlin Act forbidding public worker strikes in New York State. Defiance by Quill and other bureaucrats notwithstanding, union officials generally *hide behind* the ubiquitous no-strike laws like the Taylor Law, which, with its massive fines and jail time for union leaders, replaced Condon-Wadlin in New York.

In 1981, as 13,000 PATCO air traffic controllers went on strike, Ronald Reagan dusted off plans hatched by his predecessor, Democrat Jimmy Carter, and fired the entire workforce, dragging their leaders off to jail in chains. His basis in law was the 1978 CSRA. Organized labor could have beaten back Reagan's strikebreaking, but the union bureaucracy refused to mobilize labor's power to shut down the airports. The smashing of PATCO became the model for the capitalists' decades-long drive to gut the labor movement and intensify the rate of exploitation to prop up their flagging profitability. For the labor tops, the PATCO surrender became *their* model as well, ushering in decades of give-back contracts and two-tier wage systems with lower pay scales for newly hired younger workers.

It is a measure of the union bureaucracy's fealty to the capitalist state that AFSCME and other public sector unions organize the very police forces whose purpose is the violent suppression of the workers' struggle. The economic whip of unemployment and increasing destitution for the working class and oppressed has gone hand in hand with the vast expansion of police powers in the U.S., where the main growth industry has been prisons. Yet the sadistic jailers of the overwhelmingly black and Latino youth in America's overflowing prisons are themselves often union members.

AP

**In 1938 Transitional Program, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky wrote, "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."**

These hired guns of the capitalist state have no place in the workers movement. Just look at this country's prison guards, who are organized by AFSCME, SEIU, Teamsters and other unions. In California, they have been the moving force in the racist "war on crime" and such reactionary laws as "three strikes, you're out," which have made the state of California a world leader in the number of people behind bars. But there is little bellyaching from the budget slashers over the billions that are poured into maintaining the prison hellholes. These are a critical part of the edifice of organized violence by which the capitalist state enforces its rule.

### For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!

The 2005 New York City TWU strike, which garnered widespread public support, all but shut down this world financial center for some 60 hours. A key strike issue was defense of the union pension for new hires, which was under attack by the bosses long before the current recessionary "budget crisis." The workers, who had walked out in defiance of the slave-labor Taylor Law, were stabbed in the back by the leaders of other New York City unions and the TWU International leadership and, in the end, sold out by their own union misleaders. This has had a corrosive effect on the workers, breeding cynicism. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the massive fines meted out against the union and its membership under the Taylor Law, the workers *kept* their pension—*because* they struck.

This helps to illustrate why billions have been spent over the past decades to wipe out even the semblance of organized labor. Even such a minimal, if supportable, law as the Employee Free Choice Act—which would allow workers to organize through a simple card check as against the prolonged "secret ballot" procedures that give employers additional time to mobilize to crush pro-union sentiment—ignited a well-funded corporate barrage in opposition and is now all but dead. The reason is a simple calculation. Despite the sellouts of the labor tops, a unionized worker continues to make a median wage that is $200 more a week than a non-union worker.

The unions are elementary defense organizations of the working class against unbridled exploitation. The question of turning them into fighting organizations for the working class, which will take up the fight for black freedom, for immigrant rights and for the defense of those whose very lives have been written off by the exploiters and their state, is a political one. As Trotsky wrote more than 70 years ago: "The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

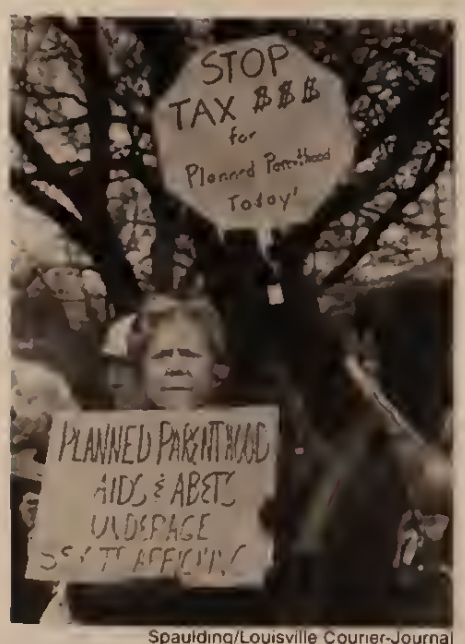
Two possible roads lie before the working class. There is the bureaucracy's acceptance that the workers must "sacrifice" to preserve the profits and rule of American capitalism, which has led to disaster. Or there is the class-struggle road of mobilizing the power of the working class in the necessary battles against the capitalist masters. In the course of such struggle, under a leadership that arms the working class with an understanding of the nature of capitalist society, the workers will become imbued with the consciousness of their historic interests as a class fighting for itself and for all of the oppressed. Such consciousness requires a political expression. That means the fight to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose purpose is not only to defend the working class against the menace of its own devastation but to rid the planet of the source of that devastation, capitalism itself, and the state that preserves it.■

# Abortion...

*(continued from page 12)*

the poverty line. In all of West Philadelphia, the infant mortality rate resembles that of a Third World country: 15 per 1,000 live births. This is more than double the national rate, which is itself the *highest* rate of the 33 countries that the *New York Times* (26 February) described as having "advanced economies." In West Philly, low birth weight is a major problem. For the women living there, abortion—normally a simple procedure that is safer than childbirth—is *not* always safe, *not* always legal and certainly *not* affordable. Many women have trouble getting the money together quickly, and young women especially are often pounded with guilt by repressive parents, violent boyfriends or hellfire preachers, so they end up having their abortions only at the last moment.

Religious scam artists ply their trade not only in the evangelical Christian bible belt. In Manhattan recently, a Texas-based group called "Life Always" put up a billboard about a half-mile from a Planned Parenthood facility. As part of its national campaign targeting minority neighborhoods, the billboard showed the picture of a little black girl with the grotesque message: "The most dangerous place for African Americans is in the womb." The billboard went up on February 22; two days later, it was taken down, having outraged much of the city, not least the black populace. Life Always' pastor, Stephen Broden, ranted: "The survival of our country, our nation is tied to the woman's womb! And if we are assaulting that womb, if we are attacking that womb, we are on a path to self-destruction!" Such is the repulsive pathology of these bigots, to whom women are destined to be barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen forever.



Spaulding/Louisville Courier-Journal

**Anti-abortion bigots rally against Planned Parenthood in Louisville, Kentucky, February 14.**

Lord knows that Obama rarely passes up the opportunity to reaffirm his credentials as a true believer in the Christian faith. Covering for him, the reformist International Socialist Organization wrote an article on the West Philly case, "Like Roe Never Happened" (*Socialist Worker*, 25 January), that roundly denounced the right for its attacks on abortion rights but made not one mention of President Obama or the Democratic Party.

### For Women's Liberation Through International Socialist Revolution!

Tens of thousands of women across the world die each year from illegal abortions. Some researchers estimate that in Latin America and the Caribbean the primary cause of death for women between the ages of 15 and 39 is complications from illegal abortions. Poverty and backwardness, enforced around the globe by imperialist domination, mean that the infrastructure necessary to bring basic medical care, contraception and abortion to Third World women is simply not there. Nor will it ever be, short of the destruction of the capitalist system by victorious working-class revolution and the establishment of proletarian state rule. It is precisely the hold of religious obscurantism, anti-homosexual bigotry and the treatment of women as simply the bearers of—and those responsible for rearing—the next generation that must be eradicated by laying the material basis for the full equality of the sexes.

The fight for women's liberation is a necessary part of the struggle for the emancipation of all the exploited and oppressed masses throughout the world. The main source of women's oppression is the institution of the family. As we noted in our article, "Fifty Years After the Pill: Still a Long Way to Go" (*WV* No. 968, 5 November 2010):

> "The war on abortion rights has become a spearhead for social and political reaction because at its heart lies the question of legal and social equality for women. Providing women with some control over whether or not to have children, abortion is viewed as a threat to the institution of the family....
>
> "The capitalist class seeks to buttress the family, which, along with organized religion and the state, form a triad that props up the exploitation of labor. To free women from their deeply entrenched special oppression will take a workers revolution to rip this system of exploitation out by the roots and replace it with a workers government to begin the construction of a socialist world."

Referring to the early Soviet workers republic, Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 October Revolution, wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936): "The revolutionary power gave women the right to abortion, which in conditions of want and family distress, whatever may be said upon this subject by the eunuchs and old maids of both sexes, is one of her most important civil, political and cultural rights." It is this vision of socialist freedom that we continue to stand on today.■

Hulmacher/The Wichita Eagle

**Dr. George Tiller, murdered by "right to life" terrorist in May 2009.**

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WORKERS VANGUARD

## Democrats, Republicans Attack Women's Rights

# For Free, Safe Abortion on Demand!

Demotix

**Boston, February 26: Abortion-rights activists protest bill to eliminate federal funding for Planned Parenthood and other attacks on women's rights.**

For decades Democrats, liberals and feminists have offered up one concession after another that have whittled away abortion rights and emboldened the anti-abortion bigots, who have in turn launched a renewed legislative offensive. In state after state, Republican politicians have introduced bills aiming to eliminate abortion rights, while reactionary "right to life" outfits have launched a vicious campaign against Planned Parenthood to further limit access to abortion.

The attacks have not just come from crazed right-wing Republican politicians intent on reversing the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. Not long after *Roe*, the Hyde Amendment, passed in 1976 under Democratic Party president Jimmy Carter, excluded abortion from federal health care services provided to low-income people. Obama's health care "reform" was in line with the Hyde Amendment, which eliminated abortion coverage from Medicaid. Many often vote for the Democratic Party largely on the basis that it would defend *Roe v. Wade* in the courts. But, as one concession after another has been made, including restricting late-term abortions, pro-Democratic outfits such as the National Organization for Women have limited their actions to "fight the right" electoral tactics even as abortion rights continue to be axed.

Already, at least 38 states have "fetal homicide" laws. In Utah, women can be charged with criminal homicide for obtaining an illegal abortion or inducing a miscarriage, including through "reckless" behavior. The law was prompted by the tragic case of a desperate 17-year-old who paid a man to beat her in the hopes of inducing a miscarriage. Anti-abortion bigots are now looking to replicate a Nebraska law that virtually bans all abortions at 20 weeks after conception. Across the country, bills are being introduced to force women seeking abortions to view ultrasounds of the fetus—as is already the law in Oklahoma—and to ban any abortion coverage by private insurance companies. In Georgia, a Republican state legislator has introduced a bill that would make abortion the legal equivalent of murder and force the criminal investigation of women who suffer miscarriages. In South Dakota and Nebraska bills were introduced to allow the use of "justifiable homicide" as a defense for the murder of abortion providers.

Through violence, intimidation and bipartisan legal assaults, the legal right to abortion in the U.S. is severely constricted. If you live in one of the many areas where no providers exist, you have little "choice," unless you have the time and money to travel. Some 87 percent of U.S. counties and 31 percent of metropolitan areas have no abortion services. The panoply of anti-abortion laws and restrictions on birth control particularly targets young, working-class and poor women. The wealthy will always get their medical care, including abortions, whether legal or not.

Seeking to further curtail access to abortion, anti-woman bigots are now targeting Planned Parenthood, which provides essential medical services of all kinds especially to young, working-class and minority women; one in five women will use Planned Parenthood sometime in her life. Scandal-mongering videotapes made by "Live Action," a reactionary anti-abortion outfit, portrayed a man and woman posing as a pimp and young prostitute seeking health services including abortion, showing them receiving advice from Planned Parenthood workers in various locations. Stirring up the sex panic ever roiling the surface of American politics, the videos set off a wave of Puritanical vapors and hand-wringing, as intended, including among supposed defenders of women's rights.

Planned Parenthood's response to this sting operation was cringing. Amy Woodruff, manager of their Perth Amboy, New Jersey, clinic, did her job, giving commonsense advice to the people in the video. This included reassurances of confidentiality, how to evade legal complications and useful health tips (like only "waist up" sexual activity for two weeks after an abortion). But amid the furor, Planned Parenthood *fired* her, setting a dangerous precedent for others who may need such advice in the future. There is now at least one bill before Congress calling to bar government funding to Planned Parenthood. For our part, we agree with the gossip Web site Gawker's February 4 headline: "Even Teen Hookers Need Abortions." We call for the abolition of all laws against "crimes without victims," which include drug use and prostitution. We oppose "squeal rules" and all other restrictions on abortion directed at minors.

The anti-Planned Parenthood scam recalls the operation launched by right-wing yahoos against the liberal community organizing group ACORN, whose main "crime" was to register poor people and minorities to vote. Despite its close ties to the Democratic Party, Democrats joined with Republicans in voting to defund it, leading to its dissolution.

At its most extreme, bloody and reactionary, the anti-abortion campaign has meant the murder of abortion providers, such as Dr. George Tiller in 2009. Dr. Tiller's clinic in Wichita, Kansas, now closed, was one of only three in the entire country that provided late-term abortions. Between 1993 and 1998 anti-abortion terrorists murdered seven people for providing abortions: Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola, Florida, in 1993; Dr. John Britton, along with a clinic escort, in Pensacola a year later; Lee Ann Nichols and Shannon Lowney at a clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1994; a security guard in a 1998 Birmingham, Alabama, firebombing that also severely wounded a nurse; and Dr. Barnett Slepian in Buffalo, New York, killed by a sniper outside his home in 1998.

The organized labor movement has every interest in fighting for the rights of women. Such a struggle must be waged independently of all capitalist parties as part of the fight for free, quality health care for all, as well as for free, 24-hour childcare, which would address the deep class and racial oppression of poor and minority women. *For free abortion on demand!*

### War on Women, War on Workers

It is no accident that anti-woman attacks have escalated at the same time that the ruling class has undertaken a vicious union-busting offensive, seeking to get rid of nearly every "overhead" associated with the most minimal social safety net. Not only abortion rights, but also funding for medical research, family planning and reproductive health care services for women are being slashed to the bone. This includes the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, which serves 9.6 million low-income women, new mothers and infants each month. Likewise, there are proposals to slash grants for prenatal heath care to low-income women—cuts proposed in various degrees by *both* capitalist parties. The late, great comedian George Carlin, who famously quipped that "not every ejaculation deserves a name," caught the hypocrisy of abortion opponents: "They will do anything for the unborn. But once you're born, you're on your own."

In such a climate, the recent scandal over a West Philadelphia clinic throws a light on the wretched "services," such as they exist, that many poor people get. Two women died and many more were mutilated in botched abortion procedures by one Dr. Kermit Gosnell and his ill-trained staff, according to a January Philadelphia grand jury report. Officials had ignored medical complaints about the clinic since at least 1993, and it hadn't been inspected by health officials for 16 years. Filthy and dangerous, the clinic was, according to the grand jury report, responsible for many injuries to women, including infections and perforated bowels and uteruses.

The state, of course, has gone after Gosnell for performing late-term abortions—abortion after 24 weeks is a crime in Pennsylvania. He is being charged with eight counts of murder, seven of them for aborting late-term fetuses, which should be no crime. ***It is the anti-womon laws and desperate conditions that force poor, block and immigrant women into such squolid back-alley operotions.*** In the Mantua neighborhood of West Philadelphia, where Gosnell's operation was located, over 16,000 people live below

*continued on page 11*

WV Photo

**Spartacist League joined 2,000 others in defending local abortion clinics in Washington, D.C., against attack by Operation Rescue, January 1992.**

# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 976

18 March 2011


## Labor Tops Derail Anger, Promote Democrats

# Wisconsin: Defend the Unions Through Class Struggle!

MARCH 13—Republican Wisconsin governor Scott Walker has thrown down the gauntlet to the entire labor movement, signing a law stripping the state's public workers unions of their right to bargain for their members. This is an open attempt to destroy the public sector unions, which are similarly under attack in Ohio, Indiana and other states. The law dictates that pay increases—the sole issue on which the unions are now permitted to bargain—may not exceed the cost of living index unless approved by a statewide referendum. Workers' contributions toward their health care and pensions will be dramatically increased, meaning an effective pay cut of 8 percent on average. Wisconsin's Democrats, who put up a show of stalling the vote on the union-busting bill by fleeing the state, had earlier stated their support to all the key economic take-backs, as had the state's labor officialdom.

The labor movement must beat back this wage-slashing, union-busting attack. Six years ago in Indiana, collective bargaining rights were abolished for state workers, leading to a decline in union membership from 66 percent to 7 *percent* of the eligible workforce. What is and has been needed is strike action to close Wisconsin down. Many workers have shown their determination to wage such a fight. Tens of thousands have repeatedly rallied to defeat the anti-union onslaught. Across the U.S., private sector unions have joined in demonstrations against similar legislation and cutbacks, which are designed to make working people pay for the economic depression—a crisis caused by the capitalists' insatiable drive for profits. National polls indicate that broad swaths of the population, hammered by the economic crisis, are opposed to the anti-union attacks.

Hart/Wisconsin State Journal

**March 5: Mass rally at State Capitol in Madison against Governor Walker's union-busting bill.**

Occupation of the Wisconsin State Capitol by protesters drew worldwide attention to Madison, but to date there has been no strike action. Why? The pro-capitalist trade-union leadership has been working overtime to divert workers' militancy into Democratic Party electioneering, centrally through a campaign to recall Republican legislators as well as Walker.

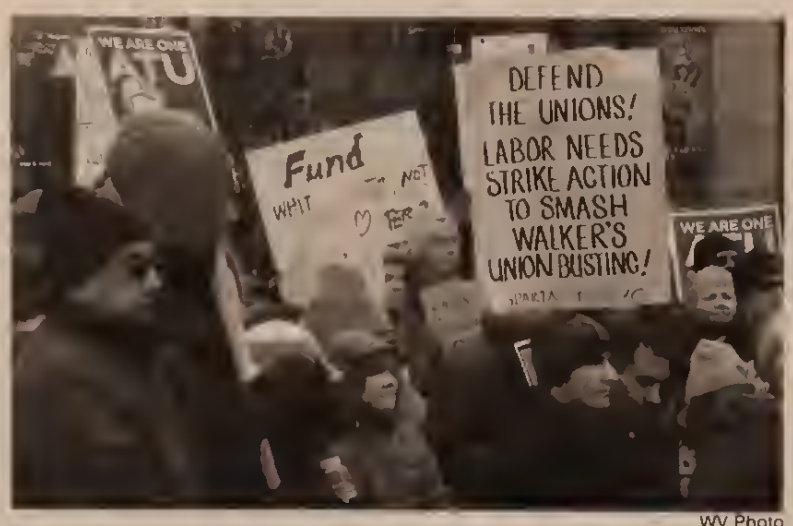
This was made clear at a 100,000-strong demonstration in Madison yesterday mainly organized by the AFL-CIO. After the farmers, after local Democratic officials, after the folk singers and a parade of speakers from the "Fab 14" state senators, after the preacher pronounced, "Amen," and the crowd was dispersing—only then did a few labor officials speak. And when they did, they urged Wisconsinites to channel their energies into the recall of eight Republican senators who backed the governor and into pressuring the capitalist courts to overturn the bill. Not a word was uttered from the podium about mobilizing labor's strike power. Spartacist comrades put up a banner and held signs highlighting the need to break with the Democratic Party and build a revolutionary workers party, selling most of our literature to people who sought us out because of our hard stand against the Democrats.

The labor bureaucracy's service to the Democrats and prostration before anti-union laws are a *recipe for defeat*. Virtually every gain of the labor movement, including the very right for unions to exist, has been achieved through class struggle against America's capitalist rulers. The Democrats, deceptively promoted by union leaders as "friends of labor," are simply the other major party of U.S. capitalist rule. The union bureaucrats are core cadres of that party, assuring that the unions they lead provide votes for its candidates and millions of dollars in dues money to electoral campaigns.

For that reason, the Democrats seldom seek to bust the unions outright. But they are no more averse than Republicans to leading savage attacks on the wages and benefits of working people in the service of the bosses. In fact, Walker was elected governor in a contest against the Democratic mayor of Milwaukee, who supported cutting back public employee benefits. The mother of anti-union legislation, the Taft-Hartley Act, was passed in 1947 over the veto of Democratic president Harry Truman, who knew full well that the veto would not withstand a Congressional override. Notwithstanding the Democratic Party's pledges to abolish Taft-Hartley, the law survived several administrations, during which the Democrats controlled the presidency and both houses of Congress.

Barack Obama, as a candidate for the presidency, promised to walk picket lines to defend union rights. Once elected as Commander-in-Chief of the American imperialist order, he quickly moved in collaboration with the auto bosses and the United Auto Workers misleaders to lead the assault that reduced the UAW—once the symbol of union power in this country, with a peak membership of 1.5 million—to a shell of its former self. Obama went on to launch a war against teachers unions by endorsing the wholesale firing of Central Falls,

*continued on page 2*




WV Photo

Hart/Wisconsin State Journal

**Left: Spartacists call for labor action at March 5 rally. Right: March 10 protest inside Capitol. Union tops' recall campaign channels workers' anger into capitalist Democratic Party.**

**For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

**Women and the East German Deformed Workers State....4**

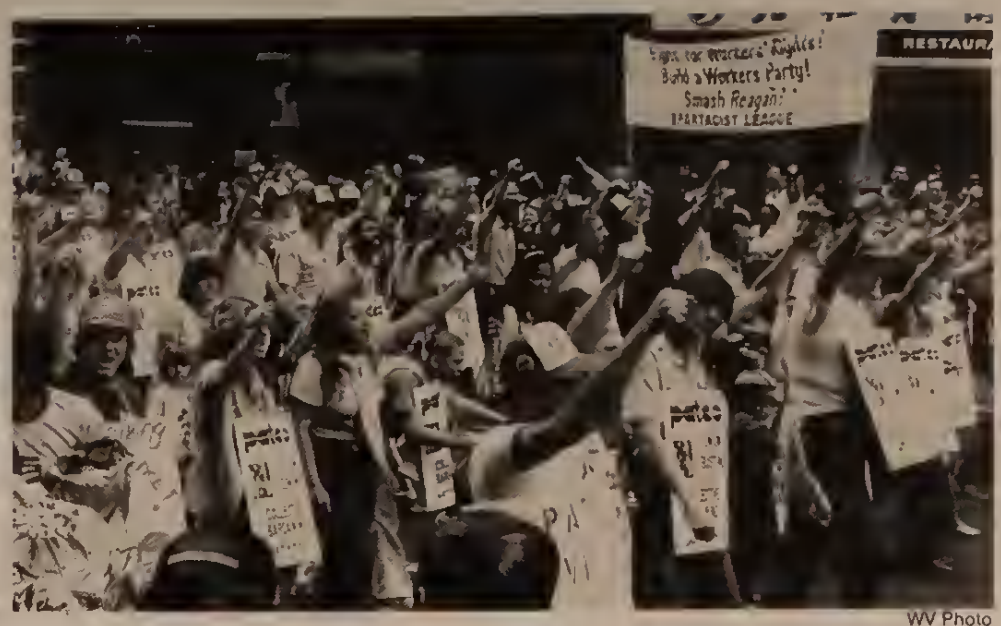
# Wisconsin...

*(continued from page 1)*

Rhode Island, high school teachers last year. Recently, a presidential spokesman repeated his boss's "indictment" of the legislation in Wisconsin as an effort "to denigrate or vilify public sector employees." This is equivalent to complaining that Hurricane Katrina was bad for tourism.

Scott Walker promised to create a PATCO moment for Wisconsin's public sector unions, that is, to destroy them. Ronald Reagan's unchallenged destruction of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981, utilizing a plan drawn up by his predecessor, Democrat Jimmy Carter, set the stage for a ruthless capitalist offensive against the unions and the working class as a whole. It didn't have to be that way. Labor could have beaten back the union-busters by shutting down the airports. The power to do this was in the hands of unions like the IAM machinists, which organized the ground crews. There was plenty of sentiment in labor's ranks to fight to defend PATCO, as seen in the massive 19 September 1981 labor demonstration—half a million strong—in Washington, D.C. But IAM president "Wimpy" Winpisinger, a leader of the Democratic Socialists of America, refused to call solidarity strike action, leaving individual workers to decide whether to honor or cross PATCO picket lines.

AP




WV Photo

**1981 PATCO air traffic controllers strike: Union leaders arrested (left); NYC Labor Day rally (right). Labor bureaucrats refused to shut down airports, isolating PATCO in face of government attack that destroyed union.**

Emboldened by the decimation of private sector unions—a product of the prostration of the labor leadership to the dictates of the capitalist order—state governments under both Democratic and Republican administrations are threatening the hard-won gains and even the very existence of public employee unions. The Wisconsin law proscribes the dues check-off system and mandates yearly union recertification elections in the hope that workers will refuse to pay their dues and abandon their unions. We oppose the capitalist state abolishing dues check-off or intervening in any other way into union affairs. At the same time, it is in labor's basic interest that union representatives, and not the bosses, collect union dues. This money should go toward building strike funds and otherwise supporting workers struggle, not be squandered to fund Democratic Party candidates. There must be a fight for the complete independence of the unions from the state agencies and political parties of the capitalist enemy.

The mass demonstrations in defense of Wisconsin's public sector unions have moved various ersatz socialist organizations to respond to calls for strike action. In the case of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), this has meant issuing a few mealy-mouthed criticisms of the union bureaucrats while simultaneously supporting their pro-Democratic recall campaign. An 11 March editorial in the ISO's *Socialist Worker* emphasizes: "The Republican senators *should* be recalled—and Walker, too." Even while chastising union officials for "demobilizing and disarming" workers, the editorial disparages the call for a statewide strike as "unlikely to get very far," advocating instead "pickets before work or noontime marches." This is the kind of "activism" that would bring smiles to the bosses' faces, as it neither stops operations nor challenges anti-strike laws.

The ISO is at one with the labor bureaucracy, which has itself made perfectly clear that the recall effort is *counterposed* to preparing the unions to wage the strike action that is necessary to defeat the union-busters. This comes as no surprise, as the ISO, along with the many other fake "socialists," seeks not the overthrow of the system that is based on the exploitation of labor but its reform.

Wisconsin workers realize, correctly, that they are treated as if they have no rights. Anesthetized by decades of labor's passivity enforced by capitalism's labor lieutenants, in the face of repeated attacks by the bosses, workers must be won to the understanding that such treatment is not an aberration but the very essence of the capitalist "democratic" order. That order enforces through its state power the democratic right of the rulers to exploit and repress the toiling masses. The cops, falsely portrayed by many reformists as fellow workers, now close off the Capitol in Madison to demonstrators and will not, if the unions strike, be hesitant to employ force against the picket lines. The courts will quickly move to proscribe militant class struggle. And the "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party will promise reform while supporting the forces of law and order.

Many workers fear that strike action can only result in further losses. While it will not be easy to defeat the arrogant rulers' union-busting drive, playing by the bosses' rules is a sure guarantee of defeat. It requires the mobilization of the mass strength and solidarity of the working class to prevail against the capitalists' attacks. As we wrote last issue in "All Labor Must Fight Assault on Public Workers Unions!" (*WV* No. 975, 4 March):

> "Two possible roads lie before the working class. There is the bureaucracy's acceptance that the workers must 'sacrifice' to preserve the profits and rule of American capitalism, which has led to disaster. Or there is the class-struggle road of mobilizing the power of the working class in the necessary battles against the capitalist masters. In the course of such struggle, under a leadership that arms the working class with an understanding of the nature of capitalist society, the workers will become imbued with the consciousness of their historic interests as a class fighting for itself and for all of the oppressed. Such consciousness requires a political expression. That means the fight to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose purpose is not only to defend the working class against the menace of its own devastation but to rid the planet of the source of that devastation, capitalism itself, and the state that preserves it."■

## Labor Versus the Capitalist State

TROTSKY

LENIN

*Loyal to the capitalist system, the labor bureaucracy in the U.S. has for decades played by the bosses' rules, gravely undermining the unions and emboldening the bourgeoisie in its current drive against public workers. In an unfinished 1940 article on the tasks facing revolutionary Marxists in the labor movement, Leon Trotsky emphasized the urgency of fighting for the complete independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state.*

Monopoly capitalism does not rest on competition and free private initiative but on centralized command. The capitalist cliques at the head of mighty trusts, syndicates, banking consortiums, etc., view economic life from the very same heights as does state power; and they require at every step the collaboration of the latter. In their turn the trade unions in the most important branches of industry find themselves deprived of the possibility of profiting by the competition among the different enterprises. They have to confront a centralized capitalist adversary, intimately bound up with state power. Hence flows the need of the trade unions—insofar as they remain on reformist positions, i.e., on positions of adapting themselves to private property—to adapt themselves to the capitalist state and to contend for its cooperation. In the eyes of the bureaucracy of the trade union movement, the chief task lies in "freeing" the state from the embrace of capitalism, in weakening its dependence on trusts, in pulling it over to their side. This position is in complete harmony with the social position of the labor aristocracy and the labor bureaucracy, who fight for a crumb in the share of superprofits of imperialist capitalism. The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the "democratic" state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and especially in time of war....

It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilize the masses, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime. The primary slogan for this struggle is: *complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state*. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy.

The second slogan is: *trade union democracy*. This second slogan flows directly from the first and presupposes for its realization the complete freedom of the trade unions from the imperialist or colonial state....

The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.

—Leon Trotsky, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (1940)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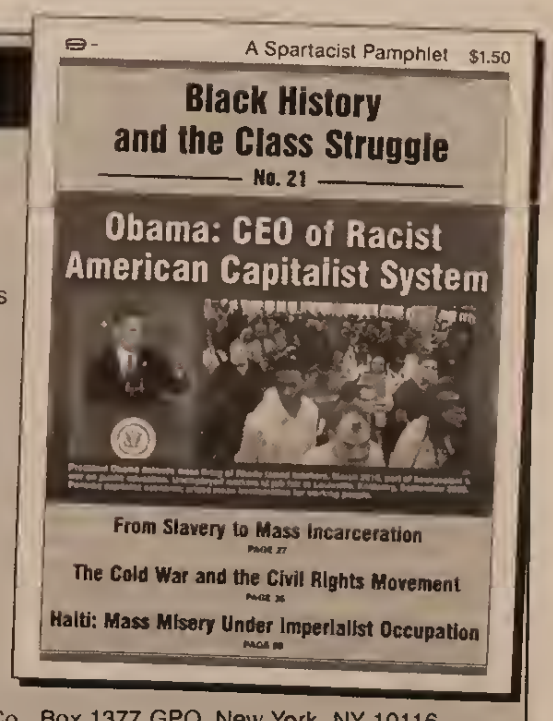

# Steelworkers in Bitter Struggle Over Pensions

## Ontario

*The following article is reprinted from* Spartacist Canada *No. 168 (Spring 2011), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.*

SPARTACIST CANADA

On January 29, 10,000 unionized workers marched through downtown Hamilton in defense of the 900 members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1005 locked out by U.S. Steel since November 7. This was one of the largest labour protests in Ontario since the Days of Action of the mid to late 1990s—the one-day local general strikes against the then Tory provincial government. Busloads of workers poured into Hamilton from around Ontario, while others came from Quebec and the U.S. in a show of solidarity against U.S. Steel's drive to gut pensions.

The company is demanding the de-indexing of the already meagre pensions of 9,000 retirees, leaving them to be chewed up by inflation. It wants new hires barred from the existing pension plan and forced into a "defined contribution" plan. Such a divisive two-tier system would put the pensions of younger workers completely at the mercy of the capitalist stock market. Even before the lockout, the steel bosses stopped indexing pensions and shut down the blast furnace in Hamilton, stopping steel production altogether. There is speculation that the plant will not reopen.

In 2007 U.S. Steel bought Stelco's Hamilton and Nanticoke, Ontario plants and quickly shredded its toothless "guarantees" to maintain the workforce—then at 3,105 workers—and production levels for the next three years. Sweeping layoffs and long plant shutdowns saw the shrunken workforce further decline. In August 2009, U.S. Steel locked out USW Local 8782 at the Nanticoke plant. After eight long months out of work, the local swallowed the company's demand to bar new hires from the pension plan. Having won there, U.S. Steel turned its guns on Local 1005.

This is a crucial battle for all labour, and a win for the workers of Local 1005 could help reverse the bosses' unremitting attacks. For many decades, Hamilton-area steelworkers, along with miners in Sudbury and auto workers in Oshawa and Windsor, were the bastions of the Ontario labour movement. To the extent that unionized workers have pension plans, medical benefits and health and safety protection it is in large part thanks to the hard-fought struggles of steelworkers, miners and auto workers to forge strong international industrial unions in the 1930s and 1940s.

But for years the bosses have been waging a one-sided class war against workers, as the pro-capitalist labour misleaders negotiate one giveback after another, leading to the withering of the unions and impoverishment of the working class. Loyal to the right-wing social democrats of the NDP [New Democratic Party], or even to the capitalist Liberal Party, these labour bureaucrats will not lead the kind of struggle that is needed. Sharing with their capitalist masters a belief in the inviolability of the profit system and pushing a program of Canadian nationalism, the union leaders strangle the enormous potential social power of the proletariat. The difficult task of building a class-struggle leadership in the unions to carry out the vitally necessary battles against the capitalist class is long overdue.

United Steelworkers-Métallos

**January 29: 10,000 rally in Hamilton Day of Action to support locked-out steelworkers.**

### Capitalist Profit and Accumulating Misery

"Most of us left parts of our bodies in Stelco when we left. I don't have any use of my left hand, I have two artificial hips," said a retired Local 1005 millwright at the January 29 protest. For the thousands of Local 1005 pensioners making less than $1,000 per month, about three-quarters of whom are widows, de-indexing pensions will be catastrophic. Many already survive thanks only to food banks and second-hand stores.

Capitalist exploitation uses up and destroys workers. To survive, workers must sell to the capitalist their ability to work. It is from the surplus value created by their blood and sweat that the billions in profits flow into the pockets of the bosses. When workers are injured or too infirm or too old and can no longer sell their labour power, they are discarded. U.S. Steel follows this inexorable logic in its attack on the pensions of those who toiled in Hamilton's steel mills for 30 or 40 years.

In Canada as in the U.S. and Europe, governments and private capitalists alike are attacking pensions as a way to boost profits. In line with this, the federal Conservatives have just announced a private "pension" scheme that will benefit not the eleven million Canadians who have no pension plans, but the profit-bloated banks. The capitalists' campaign against the supposed "gold-plated" benefits of unionized workers is meant to prepare the ground for further attacks while fomenting anti-union sentiment.

If the harshest blows have so far fallen on workers in the private sector, the bosses are now jacking up the attacks on unionized public sector workers. Canada Post seeks to destroy both the pension and sick plans of postal workers. In Toronto, right-wing mayor Rob Ford has launched an offensive against transit workers and is making a union-busting bid to contract out garbage pickup.

The capitalists' answer to the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s is that "all must sacrifice." And "all," for the ruling class, means the working class. In his great work *Capital* Karl Marx wrote: "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital." The truth of this statement can be seen in the destruction of livelihoods, lost homes, destroyed families, gutted social services, impoverished retirement and more. As for the much-vaunted "recovery," the capitalists admit that it has been "jobless." The only thing recovering is their profits.

The fight for jobs, pensions and other desperately needed benefits is the fight against the devastation of the working people. It is necessary to demand an end to layoffs by shortening the workweek at no loss in pay, as part of the struggle for jobs for all. Unemployment benefits must be greatly increased and extended to everyone who cannot find a job, and all pensions must be completely guaranteed by the government. A massive program of public works at union wages is needed to rebuild roads and bridges, fix the decaying health system and schools and expand public transit.

But such basic and obviously necessary demands, the elements of which were laid out in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the rapacious capitalist rulers. The capitalist state, including the cops, courts and army, exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed or wielded to serve the interests of working people. The catastrophe of joblessness, threatening the disintegration of the working class, can be effectively fought only by a workers movement led by those committed to the struggle for socialist revolution and the creation of a rationally planned, socialist economy on an international scale.

### Protectionism: Joining with the Enemy Class

The Hamilton steelworkers' struggle closely mirrors the bitter year-long 2009-10 strike by more than 3,000 nickel miners at Vale Inco in Sudbury. There too, the company sought massive concessions, including gutting the pension plan. The workers of USW Local 6500 fought with all their might, but the union leadership—like the leaders of Local 1005 in Hamilton today—offered Canadian nationalism as the answer to the bosses' attacks. In the end, the Vale Inco workers voted up a contract that bars new-hires from the defined benefit pension plan.

The Sudbury USW tops held up the former Canadian-owned Inco as a positive alternative to the Brazilian-owned Vale, which took over the company in 2006. But it was Inco that slashed tens of thousands of mining jobs, and every gain Canadian nickel miners won came through struggle *against* these mining magnates. Canadian mining corporations were and are notorious for their rapacious brutality in countries like Ecuador, the Philippines and the Congo. As for attacks on pensions, look at Nortel, the Canadian telecommunications giant, which cried bankruptcy and then, backed by the courts and government, destroyed the pensions of more than 17,000 former employees.

In 1980, there were more than 25,000 workers at Stelco facilities; it was this Canadian company that ravaged the workforce, reducing it by more than 20,000 before U.S. Steel took over. After a frenzy of international buyouts in 2006-07, the steel industry in Canada is now almost entirely owned by international conglomerates from Europe, India, Brazil, the U.S. and elsewhere. Regardless of who owns the steel plants, the capitalist exploiters will attack the working class in their drive for greater profits.

Today, reflecting the declining economic and industrial power of U.S. imperialism, U.S. Steel, while still the largest American steel company, ranks only tenth in world production. The layoffs in Hamilton, the shifts in production to the U.S., attacks on pensions: all are aimed at improving their position against their European, Asian and other competitors. The increasing centralization of the steel industry, with various international conglomerates jockeying for control, cries out not for a protectionist campaign for a "Canadian steel industry"—i.e., for home-grown exploiters—but for *international class struggle*. Above all, it points to the need for an internationally planned socialist economy under the rule of the working class.

Far from this perspective, the leadership of USW Local 1005 calls to "rebuild Stelco," and denounces U.S. Steel as "unwilling to be a participant in Canadian nation-building." The lead banner on the January 29 march proclaimed "Canadians Stand as One!" The Local 1005 tops even uphold Stelco as a "national treasure!" If these slogans have a somewhat quirky Mao-oid quality, that is not accidental, for the president of the local, Rolf Gerstenberger, is also a prominent supporter of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist).

But there is not a trace of communism here, only the purest nationalist hombast, and it coexists perfectly with the politics of the mainstream bureaucrats in the Ontario Federation of Labour and other major unions. In an article in the Hamilton *Spectator* (9 December), Canadian Auto Workers leader Ken Lewenza mourned the loss of "corporate icons" and "key productive jewels" like Stelco. It was Lewenza, two years ago, who agreed to unprecedented wage and benefit cuts of $19 an hour at Chrysler and $22 an hour at General Motors, setting the stage for the latest

*continued on page 10*

# For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

# Women and the East German Deformed Workers State

*The following article was translated from* Spartakist *No. 185 (October 2010), which is published by the Spartakist Workers Party, German section of the International Communist League. It is based on an International Women's Day 2010 presentation by Barbara Köhler in Hamburg.*

*PART ONE*

In Berlin, we held our forum on Women's Day, and on my way to it the subway TV ran a news item that Alice Schwarzer, Germany's icon of bourgeois feminism, had spoken. She stated that she was against Women's Day, a "socialist invention" having something to do with striking women textile workers. In her own words: "It's got absolutely nothing to do with feminism!"

Occasionally even this reactionary lady says something true. As a bourgeois movement, feminism makes men the hindrance to achieving women's equality. Thereby it deepens the division of the proletariat fomented by the capitalists, setting men against women. We communists know that the oppression of women is inextricably tied to class rule and exploitation. We fight for mobilizing the entire proletariat, men as well as women, against the special oppression of women. Without women, no socialist revolution; without socialist revolution, no liberation of women!

Redaktions-Service-Maecker

**Schoolgirls receive industrial training in East German factory.**

Schwarzer was expressing the hostility of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat—International Women's Day marks the strike of women textile workers in Manhattan on 8 March 1908. But what we think of above all is 8 March 1917 (February 23 according to the old Russian calendar)—the women textile workers strike in St. Petersburg. That was the beginning of the February Revolution in Russia. For us communists, March 8 commemorates a day of struggle by the entire working class.

Over the entire past year, we ran articles and gave forums counterposing our communist program to the bourgeois propaganda marking 20 years of counterrevolution in the former East German deformed workers state, the DDR, with which we were inundated all year long. It was with this same program that we intervened in 1989-90 in the incipient political revolution in the DDR. The central issues were defense of the DDR against imperialism, proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy as well as socialist revolution in the West—the fight for a Red Germany ruled by workers councils (soviets).

The bourgeoisie would like to lay the DDR to rest once and for all, but it is still obsessively fixated on it. In German bourgeois circles, one of the most devastating labels you can apply is "DDR methods" or "socialism." When Ursula von der Leyen was still Minister of Family Affairs, she came out for more kindergartens, but only because the German bourgeoisie wants to raise the low birthrate and simultaneously have well-trained women in professional life. And for this sin, even this top-echelon Christian Democratic display model of a mother was accused of DDR methods.

So everybody talks about it, but *what was it really like for women in the DDR?* As communists, we apply programmatic standards in order to understand and explain things. Thus we cite the utopian socialist Fourier as an authority on the woman question. Fourier stated, "The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by women's progress towards freedom.... The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation." Marx cites Fourier very approvingly in *The Holy Family* (1845). This is one of our guidelines. But at least equally central is Engels' important insight in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884) that women's oppression is rooted in the institution of the family, which is characteristic of all class societies. Engels explains that the first condition for the liberation of women is their integration into public industry and thus into public life, leading to "the abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society."

The DDR arguably constituted the most advanced society for women so far in the history of mankind. In important respects it was even more advanced than the young, revolutionary Soviet Union. While the Bolsheviks advanced a revolutionary program for women's liberation aiming at replacing the functions of the family by socializing housework, the material poverty of the young workers state was a huge obstacle to actually putting this into practice. The DDR even at its founding, despite having emerged out of the Second World War and despite the reparations claimed by the Soviet Union, nonetheless possessed the basis for a highly industrialized society. This made a big difference.

At the end of the 1980s, over 90 percent of women in the DDR worked or were in training or ongoing education. They really had lots of economic and genuine personal independence. Women and men both acquired broad scientific training, with women working at highly skilled jobs, much more so than in the West. Among people up to 40 years old—all of whom were raised in the DDR—there were as many women as men in every form of training and education. And single mothers could be professionally active and have children because there was an extensive system of childcare facilities, often linked directly to the factories.

What made this possible in the DDR was the victory of the Red Army over Nazi Germany in 1945. The state machinery and economic power of the German bourgeoisie was smashed in the East and a state was founded based on socialized property forms—in Marxist terms, a workers state. However, this workers state was, as we Trotskyists say, deformed from the beginning because political power did not rest with the working class but with a Stalinist bureaucracy.

On the one hand, there was all this economic independence because women were active in production. But at the same time the institution of the family, which according to Engels is an institution for the oppression of women, existed in the DDR. Not only did the family exist, it was singled out and hailed. This is a contradiction that requires explanation. As Trotsky said in 1940 in regard to the Soviet Union, and is equally true of the DDR: "The workers' state must be taken as it has emerged from the merciless laboratory of history and not as it is imagined by a 'socialist' professor, reflectively exploring his nose with his finger" ("Balance Sheet of the Finnish Events," *In Defense of Marxism*).

The East German deformed workers state was Stalin's "unloved child." This was one instance of his betrayal of revolutionary opportunities in all of Europe and parts of Asia at the end of the Second World War, betrayals committed by Stalin for the sake of his agreements with his imperialist allies, the U.S. and Britain. For example, in Italy the Stalinist Communist Party made the partisans disarm and itself joined a capitalist popular-front government, thereby preventing a workers revolution and subjecting the workers to the U.S. command. In Germany, following the war the socialist aspirations of the proletariat were bureaucratically throttled. Initiatives by the workers to take over factories and towns and run them through embryonic workers councils—the antifascist committees—were suppressed.

The DDR and the other "people's democracies" arising from these social transformations were deformed workers states that came into being as a defensive Soviet reaction to the imperialists' escalating Cold War. Thus the DDR set out to build "socialism in one country" on the model of the Stalinist degenerated Soviet Union of the 1940s. The DDR bureaucracy was even willing to give it a try in half a country. This program of "socialism in one country" fundamentally contradicts Marxism, which states that socialism, as a preliminary stage to communism, must be an international social order with a material basis that transcends the bounds of even the most developed capitalist countries. To put it another way: You cannot construct socialism on the basis of material scarcity in an isolated country.

### The October Revolution of 1917

Let's go back to the program of the Bolsheviks that led the working class to victory in 1917. From the outset, their program posited that the revolution had to be extended internationally. They always saw the Russian Revolution as just the

**Left: Spartakist Workers Party March 1990 election poster, "No to Capitalist Reunification!"**

**Right: Women protest closing of day-care centers, with sign reading: "Not Every Mom Wants to Be Just a Housewife. That's Why We Need to Keep Day Care."**

beginning of revolution on a worldwide scale, and it never even occurred to them that it could survive in isolation. Early Soviet legislation granted women wide-ranging equality and freedom that even today have not been realized by the economically most advanced "democratic" capitalist countries.

Some central characteristics: civil marriage was introduced, along with divorce at the request of either partner, and any and all laws against homosexuals were abolished. The director of the Moscow Institute for Social Hygiene reported in 1923 on the underlying principles of Soviet legislation: "It declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured and no one's interests are encroached upon." ***And in 1920 the young Soviet Union was the very first government on earth to overturn criminalization of abortion***—really and truly a gain! For the first time, women were given the right to control their own bodies and were no longer degraded into reproductive machines.

The Bolsheviks were aware of the fact that the family, along with the social functions it fulfills in class society—raising children, taking care of food and clothing, seeing to education and looking after the elderly—could not simply be abolished by decree. Trotsky spoke of the "family as a shut-in petty enterprise." These functions have to be *replaced* through the socialization of housework. In the major cities of the early Soviet Union, the first steps were taken to set up facilities for socializing housework such as kindergartens, canteens and the like, but the material basis for extending them simply was not there. But the Bolsheviks in the revolutionary period of the Soviet Union told workers the truth: the liberation of women will occur once we have been able to socialize housework; at the moment we cannot simply shake this out of our shirtsleeves, but we are fighting for the extension of the revolution to the economically advanced countries—this is the way to get there!

## Degeneration of the Soviet Union and Its Effects on Women

These policies of the Soviet leadership changed because the leadership changed. In 1923-24, the hopes of the Russian working class for a speedy extension of the revolution were destroyed, particularly when a great opportunity for the working class to seize power in Germany was wasted. It was the German Communist Party's policy of looking to the Social Democratic Party and waiting for it that blew it—as well as the Communist International's hesitancy at this point in time (for more, see "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 56, Spring 2001). Hence this great possibility for bringing the Soviet Union out of its isolation was allowed to slide by.

With the Russian working class broadly discouraged, a conservative bureaucracy under Stalin seized political power. Its program was to settle down within the status quo, constructing "socialism in one country" and seeking peaceful coexistence with imperialism. Thus the leadership no longer sought to extend the revolution but only reacted to the pressure of imperialism. This bureaucratic layer no longer strove for the extension of the revolution to eliminate material scarcity, instead functioning as kind of a gendarme to administer the existing generalized want.

With Trotsky, we say that this constituted a political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. But the socialized property forms still existed. This is why we fought for a proletarian political revolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state and do so today in the remaining deformed workers states. This means that the imperative task is defending the social basis, the socialization of the means of production. But it is also necessary to drive out the leadership layer, this caste, and restore the entire power of the working class, including its political power. Leading the working class to this point, however, requires a revolutionary party, as in 1917.

In the Soviet Union, Stalin's reactionary political line quickly became directed against women. In 1936, a new constitution was adopted that banned abortion and hailed the family as the so-called unit of socialism. In his fundamental work *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Trotsky explained the underlying mechanisms:

> "Having revealed its inability to serve women who are compelled to resort to abortion with the necessary medical aid and sanitation, the state makes a sharp change of course, and takes the road of prohibition. And just as in other situations, the bureaucracy makes a virtue of necessity. One of the members of the highest Soviet court, Soltz, a specialist on matrimonial questions, bases the forthcoming prohibition of abortion on the fact that in a socialist society where there are no unemployed, etc., etc., a woman has no right to decline 'the joys of motherhood.' The philosophy of a priest endowed also with the powers of a gendarme."

And so it was on the model of this Stalinized Soviet Union that the DDR was constructed.

**Mass demonstration in West Germany in 1970s demands repeal of Paragraph 218 banning abortion, introduced by Bismarck in 1871. Inset: 1924 Communist poster by Käthe Kollwitz demands: "Down With the Paragraph Against Abortion!"**

## The DDR: A Deformed Workers State from the Outset

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky explained the dual character of the Stalinist bureaucracy. An understanding of this is vital if you want to grasp the contradictions in the DDR's policies toward women. The bureaucracy is a parasitic caste sitting atop the socialized means of production; it vacillates between fear of the working class and fear of imperialism, trying to maneuver between them so as to preserve its privileges. And though Trotsky's book was written in 1936, in our intervention into the incipient political revolution in the DDR in 1989-90 we were often told it sounds like it was written about the DDR bureaucracy, as if it were an up-to-date handbook.

The proletarian 17 June 1953 uprising underlined the DDR bureaucracy's contradictory character as a caste, rather than a class owning the means of production. With this uprising, the working class was attempting political revolution, that is, the overthrow of the leadership to gain political power while maintaining the economic foundation of the DDR. At that time, considerable sections of the Socialist Unity Party [ruling East German Stalinist party] went over to the side of the workers. One can hardly imagine a whole segment of the capitalist class going over to the side of the working class in the event of a socialist revolution! The bureaucracy was not a class but a caste, comparable to the bureaucracy in the trade unions.

Trotsky also explained in *The Revolution Betrayed* that the bureaucrats actually needed the family, namely for the social regimentation of the populace. Trotsky showed that families, far from being units of socialism, were units of social backwardness in which women, children and youth were held captive, an "archaic, stuffy and stagnant institution in which the woman of the toiling classes performs galley labor from childhood to death." That was one reason the bureaucrats needed the family—as an instrument of regimentation—but they also needed it to provide the services that society was unable to provide, due to material causes. Here, of course, it is important to see that the leadership in the Soviet Union and later in the DDR generally did not have achieving this material basis as its goal, but rather constructing "socialism" within the confines of a single country.

A revolutionary leadership in the DDR would have presented an internationalist program to the working class. Like the Bolsheviks, it would have said: We want to extend the revolution, we want to expand our material basis; this cannot be done here at this point, but in the meantime we will simply do what is possible. But what is possible cannot be simply dictated by the bureaucracy. Instead, the workers, both men and women, taking the factories as their starting point, must determine the policies of the workers state through workers councils. In a struggle to construct such workers councils, a revolutionary leadership in the DDR would have based itself on the most advanced sections of the working class. That is Trotsky's program and it's our program as well. But of course that is just what the DDR bureaucracy did not do, since such a struggle for workers councils would have meant dissolving itself. Hence the family was pushed, presented as a fighting unit of socialism, thus reinforcing reactionary notions within society.

Over the years, kindergartens, canteens, laundries, etc. were unevenly but steadily expanded, with a significant part of these facilities directly linked to the factories. However, the DDR leadership promoted this not because they wanted to do something for women's liberation but because it desperately needed young, well-educated women in the workforce who in return demanded that childcare be provided by society! The number of day-care slots for children up to three years jumped by leaps and bounds from a scant 4,700 in 1950 to over 50,000 in 1955.

This demonstrates the great effort to attract women into production in the early years of the DDR. There was another great leap between 1970 and 1975: from 166,000 to nearly 235,000 (Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, 2007). This was to fulfill [Erich] Honecker's promise to raise the living standard, which in 1975 had been termed the "unity of economic and social policies." Honecker had replaced [Walter] Ulbricht in 1970-71 following a series of scares the bureaucracy got from working-class actions, starting with the incipient proletarian political revolutions in the DDR in 1953 and Hungary in 1956, through the 1968 "Prague Spring," to major strikes against price hikes in Poland in 1970.

The bureaucracy talked itself into believing that under Honecker it could eliminate the DDR's ever-worsening performance vis-à-vis West German imperialism, in regard to the economy and living standards, by running up debts to Western bankers and increasingly cutting back on investment in many areas of the economy. The result was that in 1989 only 30 percent of the country's machines were operational at any one time, while expenditures for housing construction expanded from year to year right up to 1989. This had brought the DDR to the brink of bankruptcy in the early '80s, temporarily averted by selling DDR-processed Soviet oil to the West. But doing this caused the efficiency of the DDR economy to collapse even further.

In 1989, there was virtually one kindergarten place available per child, and in many towns the availability of daycare slots stood at over 80 percent. But in some locations women were unwilling or outright refused to use these slots out of concern that kindergarten care was inadequate. Things were even more critical in laundries, where the clothes were damaged or washing took far too long. Trotsky explained this the following way: If workers do not really have control over and cannot determine what they produce, how they do it, how they organize it, then this will impose a sort of gray curtain of indifference upon all labor. And simultaneously this whole stuffy, backward weight of the bureaucracy enveloped society like a suffocating blanket.

Also a problem with childcare facilities was that they generally were not open around the clock. The standard time they were open was approximately 6 a.m. to 6-7 p.m. This of course made it very hard for women working shifts, leaving many women unable to take jobs they would have liked, because the childcare was not there. ***We are for tap-quality childcare around the clock.*** During our intervention into the incipient political revolution in 1989-90, we often had discussions with women who saw themselves as communists but had been so deeply molded by family propaganda—this mommy propaganda that the DDR bureaucracy constantly churned out—that some were against having round-the-clock childcare, arguing that mommy really should be caring for her children in the evening. This shows how, thanks to the intervention of the bureaucracy, backward notions were preserved and became deeply ingrained in people's minds.

It is interesting and important to see that there were very many women who wanted to be heard. They felt, OK, we're told it's a socialist society, so we have the ***right*** to get more of these facilities, which replace housework for us. There were many protests directed at various levels of the bureaucracy, very many letters were addressed directly to Honecker, in which a woman worker would complain roughly: "Comrade Honecker, it's unbelievable that in the major factory where I work I'm unable to shop for groceries at lunchtime because there's nothing in the store. You absolutely have to change this." A very large number of proletarian women, of working women, thought they had the right to *more* and that they could organize it themselves, and better.

[TO BE CONTINUED]


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# Young Spartacus

# France, May 1968

## Prerevolutionary Situation Betrayed by Communist Party

*We print below the final part of a forum by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, translated and adapted from the LTF's newspaper* Le Bolchévik *(Nos. 185 and 186, September and December 2008). Parts One and Two, which appeared in* WV *Nos. 972 and 974 (21 January and 18 February), covered the period from May 13, when a nationwide general strike followed the brutal repression of student demonstrations, to the end of May.*

**LE BOLCHEVIK**

*PART THREE*

Gérald Bloncourt

**Paris, 27 May 1968: Communist Party and CGT union federation leader Benoît Frachon presented sellout deal to striking Renault-Billancourt workers, who shouted it down.**

As we saw, leading up to May 29, the regime in France was badly shaken. A portion of the bourgeoisie was wondering about President Charles de Gaulle. On the 29th, the day of the big demonstrations called by the French Communist Party (PCF), de Gaulle "disappeared" off to Baden-Baden to consult General Jacques Massu, the chief of staff of the French army in Germany. Massu convinced de Gaulle to stand firm, no doubt assuring him that the army was prepared to intervene if necessary—which would have meant civil war. Even though that plan was never carried out, it was definitely an option de Gaulle was contemplating in case he could not put an end to the strike by parliamentary means. This simple fact confirms the Marxist theory of the state, which exists to defend the capitalist order through force.

In his book *Baden '68*, Massu also reported that on May 28, the day before his meeting with de Gaulle, he had received with pomp and circumstance the commander-in-chief of Soviet troops in East Germany, Marshal Koshevoy, who recommended that he "crush" the students in Paris and had nothing but praise for de Gaulle. In other words, the bureaucracy of the Soviet degenerated workers state was prepared to see revolution in France strangled in order to preserve de Gaulle, because of his semi-autonomy from the U.S.-led anti-Soviet NATO alliance.

On the morning after the big May 29 demonstrations, the CGT trade-union federation had another meeting with the Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste (FGDS, a bloc comprising the French Socialist party and small bourgeois parties) and the PCF (which led the CGT). The purpose of the meeting was to convince the FGDS to form an electoral alliance with the PCF/CGT.

That evening, de Gaulle went on the offensive, emboldened by the support of the military and, no doubt, by the report Massu had given him about his encounter with Koshevoy. De Gaulle dissolved the French parliament, launched a virulent anti-Communist attack on the PCF and CGT, practically accusing them of plotting a coup d'état, and called for a mobilization of the "people"—in other words, the bourgeoisie, the part of the petty bourgeoisie that had not been won over by the strikers and the dregs of society well known to the likes of Charles Pasqua. (Pasqua was key for the covert operations de Gaulle ran using thugs and gangsters.) De Gaulle promised to free a dozen leaders of the OAS who were still in jail. (The OAS [Secret Army Organization] was a fascist organization led by former army officers that formed to oppose French withdrawal from Algeria.) He did this by mid June in order to make up with the far right and the officer corps.

Faced with this offensive the PCF and CGT were cornered, since they rejected any confrontation with the Gaullist regime outside of the institutional framework of parliament and the Fifth Republic. They wanted to avoid a fierce and uncontrollable clash at any price, so they had no option but to call the workers back to work. To make this happen, they would not hesitate to use any means, specifically atomizing the strike, which they started to do after the May 25-27 Grenelle negotiations between the government and capitalists and the unions. Since the PCF had no success coaxing the FGDS into an alliance, they knew they had no chance in the elections.

In spite of the absence of a revolutionary party able to expose the Stalinists' rescue operation for capitalism and split the PCF by winning over militants disgusted by their leadership, the bureaucrats encountered fierce resistance from the working class. PCF leader Georges Séguy explained it this way: "In some cases, of which there were few, our activists had to argue strongly with workers who were in favor of continuing the strike in spite of the indisputable success we had had with the demands that we won. They had hoped for more decisive changes. They didn't realize that the political situation didn't allow us to go further."

In *Whither France?* Trotsky said: "The most striking features of our epoch of capitalism in decay are *intermediate* and *transitional*: situations between the nonrevolutionary and the prerevolutionary, between the prerevolutionary and the revolutionary or...the counterrevolutionary. It is precisely these transitional stages that have a decisive importance from the point of view of political strategy" (ellipsis in original). It is easy to imagine that, if a revolutionary party had intervened as the strike grew, Trotsky's words would have become concrete after May 30, when de Gaulle decided it was time for a showdown. That was a turning point in 1968 for both the bourgeoisie and the PCF.

It wasn't until June 7 that the first significant back-to-work moves took place. It took several days to get those sectors that had kicked off the strike to go back. To finally overcome the determination to continue the strike, the bureaucrats used every contrivance: separate negotiations for individual union locals; false rumors of plants going back to work; back-to-work votes and, when those didn't obtain the expected results, revotes, and so on, until they got the strikers back to work.

While the Stalinists maneuvered, the bourgeoisie sent the cops to attack key centers of workers' resistance like the postal sorting centers and railroad terminals. On the night of June 5 the CRS riot cops took over the Renault factory in Flins. Four days of pitched battles ensued around the plant, during which the young Maoist high school student Gilles Tautin was killed. On June 11 the cops attacked the Peugeot factory in Sochaux; two workers were killed. On June 12 all the far left organizations (pseudo-Trotskyists, the "March 22 Movement" student organization, Maoist groups, etc.) were banned. Far from protesting this ban, when members of these organizations came to the factory gates, the PCF physically attacked them!

In the end, the bureaucrats and the state got what they wanted. The working class and its last holdouts, betrayed by their own leaders and lacking a credible revolutionary alternative, could no longer resist the pressure to go back to work and surrendered, sick at heart. The large percentage of workers who voted against going back shows how much reluctance there was. Some sectors like the workers in the metal industries went back very late. The CGT called to end the strike at the Renault plant in Billancourt on June 17. Krasucki (a CGT leader) got booed when he called for going back to work at Citroën on June 24. That was even after the first round of parliamentary elections, which took place on June 23 and were a landslide for the reactionaries!

### Mentors of Today's New Anti-Capitalist Party

Now let's get back to what the Pabloite predecessors of New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) spokesman Olivier Besancenot were doing in May '68. Political adaptation and capitulation are the Pabloites' hallmark. And they didn't miss any opportunities for that in this prerevolutionary period. They presented the radicalized students as the vanguard. For instance on May 20, the Pabloites' international organization, the United Secretariat, declared: "There is still a huge gap between the revolutionary maturity of the vanguard of the youth and the workers' level of consciousness." But around 1968, all the organizations in the workers movement claimed to be fighting for socialism or communism. The working class was extremely combative and tended to identify its struggles with the 1917 Russian October Revolution.

In 1968, the Pabloites were centrists, that is, revolutionary in words and opportunist in deeds. Their rhetoric was full of references to workers revolution, to dual power, even "smashing the bourgeois

*continued on page 8*

## Spartacus Youth Club Classes

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University of Illinois at Chicago
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# "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the Imperialist Military

# *No to ROTC on Campus!*

With the brutal occupation of Iraq dragging on, tens of thousands of additional troops sent to Afghanistan and increased "secret" drone bombings and CIA operations in Pakistan, the armed forces are looking for a "few good men and women" to serve in their officer corps. ***All U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now! Hands off Pakistan!*** In his January 25 State of the Union address, imperialist Commander-in-Chief Obama invoked the repeal of the military's anti-gay "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy to bolster military recruitment: "Starting this year, no American will be forbidden from serving the country they love because of who they love. And with that change, I call on all our college campuses to open their doors to our military recruiters and ROTC." Within days of the Senate's December 18 vote to allow the repeal of DADT, university presidents, including at Columbia and Yale, scrambled to bring ROTC back to their campuses. Meanwhile, the media blathered on about how the military can contribute to the "diversity of the intellectual and moral climate" (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9 January). On March 4, Harvard president Drew Gilpin Faust reinstated Naval ROTC.

ROTC had been driven off over 100 campuses by the early 1970s, as opposition to U.S. imperialism's dirty, losing war in Vietnam roiled the country. Since that time, ROTC has quietly crawled back onto many of these campuses or set up joint programs with neighboring universities. Unlike radicalized students in the 1960s, in the last few years, campus activists and liberals have narrowly focused their opposition to ROTC on the military's discriminatory DADT policy. Most recently, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups have objected to ROTC's return because the military continues to forbid transgender people from enlisting.

As revolutionary socialists, we have a principled stance against the imperialists' war aims and their armed forces, upholding German revolutionary Wilhelm Liebknecht's call: "not a man nor a penny" for the capitalist military! ROTC is a training program for officers. It's an appendage of the military, which exists to defend the bourgeoisie's interests both through war and colonial plunder abroad and by violently repressing class and social struggle at home. While we fight against discrimination, including discrimination against homosexuals in the armed forces, our goal is not to clean up the image of the capitalist military but to destroy it, along with the racist and sexist capitalist order it defends, through socialist revolution.

Since our founding, the Spartacus Youth Clubs (and our predecessors) have mobilized to keep military recruiters and ROTC off campuses, and have protested military research and CIA and cop training on campus. The universities are not ivory towers, but part of the capitalist society they exist in—campus administrations run them to serve the interest of the capitalist class, in order to train the next generation of managers, technicians, government administrators and war criminals. Nonetheless, we oppose every attempt by the ruling class to turn the campuses into direct training grounds for agents of U.S. imperialism. ***ROTC, military recruiters and cops off campus now!***

## The Imperialist Military and Capitalist Society

Militarism and imperialist war are inherent to this class-divided society in which a tiny minority of the population owns the banks and industry and amasses profit by exploiting the labor of the working class. Imperialism is not a policy that can be reformed. The final stage in the development of capitalism, characterized by the export of finance capital, imperialism is a system in which rival advanced capitalist states are compelled by the need for cheap labor, natural resources and new markets to wage wars to divide and dominate the world. The U.S. imperialists, who sit on the largest stockpile of operational nuclear weapons and have a military budget greater than that of the next 19 countries combined, are the greatest danger to the world's peoples.

The release by WikiLeaks last April of a video showing an Apache helicopter gunning down Iraqi civilians while the pilots gloated over the carnage provided a glimpse of the brutality of the U.S. imperialists' military. And for those the imperialists see as domestic opponents of their war aims, witness the treatment of Bradley Manning, who is accused of leaking this video and other materials. He has been held in solitary confinement at a military brig since last May. Since March 2 his clothes have been confiscated at night. In the morning he has been forced to stand naked outside his cell to have them returned. Obama has endorsed this treatment, which is supposedly a "precautionary measure" for Manning's safety. ***Free Bradley Manning!***

The imperialist military is a microcosm of society, reflecting the class divide between the ranks and the bourgeois officer corps, as well as the deep-rooted racism and anti-gay and anti-woman bigotry of American society as a whole. Historically, black troops have often heen keenly aware of the hypocrisy of U.S. wars for "freedom" and "democracy" while they are oppressed and discriminated against at home. As we pointed out in "Sex, Race and the Military" (*WV* No. 671, 11 July 1997): "Until the late 1940s, the military was rigidly segregated, with blacks by and large excluded from combat duty because of the bourgeoisie's overriding fear of 'Negroes with guns'." As the massive need for manpower temporarily overwhelmed traditional racist practices toward the end of World War II, blacks began to be integrated into white fighting units.

AP photos

**March 1: Residents of Ghazni, Afghanistan, burn goods distributed by U.S.-led occupation troops on same day that NATO bombing killed nine children. Inset: Obama signs Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act on December 22.**

In the U.S. today, the volunteer army relies on the economic draft to recruit the bulk of its rank-and-file soldiers. With dwindling access to higher education due to nationwide tuition hikes and the eviscerating of affirmative action, military recruitment is up. Many working-class and poor youth—disproportionately black and Latino—see joining the military as their only opportunity to get a college education or learn a skill. For black youth in particular, who face special race-caste oppression under U.S. capitalism, options are largely limited to the military, a McJob, prison or death on the streets.

As Marxists we oppose anyone volunteering for the imperialist military. We also oppose the draft. However in the event of a draft, as during the Vietnam War, we would oppose radicals refusing to serve in the military, which would only strengthen the ideological purity and political reliability of the armed forces. Instead, we say young militants should go with working-class and minority youth and continue their political agitation. (See "You Will Go!" *Spartacist* No. 11, March-April 1968.)

## "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

For more than a decade, the U.S. stood out among economically advanced countries for its policy of excluding open homosexuals from the military. Last December, Obama and the Democratic Congress pushed through the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act just weeks before the Republicans took over the House, though the repeal may take months more to go into effect. When signing the repeal, Obama enthused, "This law I'm about to sign will strengthen our national security and uphold the ideals that our fighting men and women risk their lives to defend." Referring to the many soldiers forced out of the military under the discriminatory policy, "Independent" Democrat Senator Joe Lieberman lamented, "What a waste."

Anti-sodomy laws and "perversion" screenings in the armed forces have long been used to separate out the "sissies" and "sexual degenerates" from the "real men." In 1982, Reagan signed a formal ban asserting that "Homosexuality is incompatible with military service." Since the implementation of DADT in 1993 under Democratic president Bill Clinton, over 13,000 service members were discharged and thousands more have endured aggressive harassment, victims of the military culture's particular brand of macho brutality and piggishness. Continuously vilified as rapists and pariahs, gays in the military are frequently the target of harassment, abuse and beatings.

When DADT was implemented in 1993, we wrote, "Allowing gays into the military with full rights is a simple democratic demand. However even if the formal ban is dropped, gays will still face harassment and violence at the hands of bigoted officers and fellow soldiers in this bigoted society" ("Right-Wing Bigots Mobilize Against Gays in the Military," *WV* No. 569, 12 February 1993). This has been the case for women, who were granted permanent status in the military in 1948. Today, women are discriminated against in the armed forces and violence against them remains prevalent—sexual assault is twice as common as in the civilian population.

The systematic oppression of gay and lesbian people in the military—as in society at large—cannot be eliminated under capitalism. Hatred of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people flows from the institution of the family. Under the capitalist system, any sexual arrangement that deviates from the heterosexual, monogamous paradigm is demonized. The patriarchal family acts as the main prop of the oppression of women and regiments and conservatizes each new generation whose future is to become wage slaves and cannon fodder for capitalist exploitation.

In the past, many of those hoping to avoid fighting American wars of depredation relied on what was known as the "gay excuse" to get discharged. (Famously,

*continued on page 9*

Walker/NY Times

**Columbia University, 1965: Spartacists at demonstration against ROTC during Vietnam War.**

# May 1968...

*(continued from page 6)*

state apparatus." Thus, in a book he wrote in 1968 with his then-partner Henri Weber, now a Socialist Party senator, Pabloite leader Daniel Bensaïd could say: "The broken-down regime could no longer, in these troubled times, count on its own hirelings, the forces of repression were at the end of their rope, otherwise it was a debacle. Power was there for the taking. Anything was possible. The regime survived because of the lack of any candidate to take over."

Instead of workers revolution, the Pabloites were for using pressure from the streets to form a popular-front government, that is, a government based on the alliance of bourgeois and workers parties to manage capitalism. Pierre Frank, leader of the Pabloite Parti Communiste Internationaliste, declared on May 22 (*Intercontinental Press*, 10 June 1968): "In these days when an unproclaimed general strike is in effect, it would be possible to force de Gaulle's departure and to impose a CP-FGDS government by nonparliamentary but peaceful means." The Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, the Pabloites' youth organization, tried to make this sound more appetizing with their slogan "People's government, yes! Mitterrand, Mendès-France, no!" (Mitterrand and Mendès-France were left bourgeois politicians.) Twenty years later, in 1988, Pabloite leaders Alain Krivine and Bensaïd admitted that "the formulation of 'people's government' had, however, the advantage of referring to a government of the left parties without going into any more precise considerations" (*Mai Si! 1968-1988: Rebelles et Repentis* [*Yes We May! 1968-1988: Rebels and Repenters*]). According to the Pabloites, this government—which could only have been a bourgeois government—would have been under the "control" of the working class.

Let's compare what the young Bensaïd wrote in 1968 with the hardened reformist he had become 20 years later, when he co-authored that 1988 book with Krivine. In the book, he polemicized against his earlier position, going further in Pabloite adaptation to popular-frontist and anti-Soviet pressure: "Anything was not possible in 1968: you cannot jump ahead of your own time and the existing relationship of forces. But something different was certainly possible." And, again, further on: "Today we still remain convinced that there were other possibilities, other outcomes, other roads. Not the big day, Revolution with a capital 'R,' but the overturn of the regime through the strike and through extraparliamentary mobilization." Bensaïd preferred to sweep the formulation "Anything was possible," which he has come to consider too far left, under the rug. So he made his view clear, that the general strike could have forced de Gaulle to resign, after which he expected a popular front to replace him.

"Anything is possible" was a formulation used by the centrist Marceau Pivert during the 1936 revolutionary situation in France. At that time, Trotsky polemicized very sharply against Pivert, who talked about revolution while staying inside the SFIO (the French Socialist party), in which he represented the left wing. Pivert was to end up in the propaganda office of Léon Blum's popular-front government. Trotsky sought to win youth and workers away from Pivert's influence by exposing his politics, which provided a left cover for maintaining the capitalist order. There was someone who argued "Anything is not possible" against Pivert in 1936. It was PCF leader Maurice Thorez, the gravedigger of the revolutionary situation. Bensaïd and Krivine know this perfectly well. So it's quite cynical for these two to adopt Thorez's formulation in order to denounce the positions they themselves held in 1968. In hindsight, it is clear that they have moved from centrist political positions like Pivert's to reformist ones like Thorez's.

AFP / no credit

**1936: Workers occupy construction site as class struggle sweeps France under capitalist Popular Front government. Right: Popular Front alliance leaders Léon Blum (left) of Socialist party; Maurice Thorez (right) of Communist Party, which sold out general strike that year; bourgeois Radical Party's Edouard Daladier (behind Thorez).**

Today the Pabloites have thrown their forces into building the NPA. We call it the "New Anti-Communist Party" because it clearly represents their acceptance of and integration into the "death of communism" campaign. In all his public talks, Besancenot never forgets to explain that the 1990s saw the end of a cycle, that the cycle of the 1917 Revolution is over and that, for him, references to communism, Leninism and Trotskyism are a thing of the past. Whereupon he offers up "21st-century socialism" with pathetic, classic social-democratic proposals: take from the rich to give to the poor, working-class control of capitalism, etc., which he sums up as "revolutionizing society." And above all, he's ready and willing to participate in a bourgeois government if it is "anti-capitalist."

## Voix Ouvrière's Economism in May '68

In contrast to the Pabloites' student vanguardism, Voix Ouvrière (VO) had a solid proletarian orientation, but it was mainly economist. The pamphlet that VO's successor organization Lutte Ouvrière (LO) put out for the 40th anniversary of 1968 indicates:

> "It was obvious that '*the ten million striking workers weren't demanding state power.*' For the most part, they didn't have even the slightest idea what that meant, and Séguy, Waldeck Rochet and Marchais were certainly not going to enlighten them. May 1968 was obviously not like the situation in October 1917 [in Russia], with workers councils won to the idea of taking power, nor was it even February 1917, with soviets forming a *de facto* parallel power to that of the Provisional Government. In France in 1968, there was no embryo of dual power challenging the rule of the bourgeoisie in the name of the working class, even if only *de facto*, not even at the shopfloor level where strike committees composed of representatives of the workers in struggle existed only in a tiny number of factories."

That's true, but LO mentions it in order to argue that it was impossible for such workers councils to emerge. To do so, LO needs to distort reality. What they falsify is the extent to which the country, the Gaullist regime and the state were paralyzed. They disappear the possibility, opened up by the workers mobilizations, for a revolutionary leadership to transform the strike committees into true organs of proletarian power.

But while LO chides PCF leaders Séguy and Waldeck Rochet for failing to enlighten the workers about what workers power would mean, the workers clearly were not any more enlightened by VO's newspaper and leaflets (judging by what LO has reprinted). Actually, LO concludes the passage I quoted earlier with an explanation of the program VO put forward during the entire May-June 1968 period:

> "Simply on the level of economic demands, these would have called not only for wage increases greater than the measly proposals of the 'Grenelle Agreement' [and] an immediate return to a 40-hour workweek, but also a sliding scale of wages, which is the only way to prevent the bosses from recouping, in a few months of inflation, everything they had to give up. Not by leaving it to the government to assess the rate of inflation and the adjustment to be made to wage rates, but by calling on workers themselves to organize to control this."

That is, indeed, VO/LO's whole program and the sum total of the demands you can find in all of their leaflets and articles from May-June 1968. The only thing they add today is, of course, "workers control over the factories' accounting in order to know exactly what their financial situations are." Clearly, VO's program in 1968 was the same as the CGT's. It's just that the amount they demanded for the minimum wage, etc., was greater.

For us, what will change workers' consciousness and tear them out of the clutches of the reformists and centrists is the intervention of a revolutionary party with its program. This party will be built by forging cadres, organizing the most conscious elements of the working class, the vanguard. VO's pamphlet shows they didn't explain the need to do away with capitalism until the beginning of June, when the strike had already passed its peak.

Lenin laid out the basis of his conception of the party in his 1902 work *What Is To Be Done?*, explaining that "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers." Lenin at the time was fighting against economist "socialists" like LO today, who insisted that the workers could acquire consciousness of their historic tasks spontaneously through their economic struggles. It is because of this economist conception that, throughout May-June 1968, the program VO/LO intervened with never went beyond simple economic demands, only for a few cents more than what the CGT/PCF were asking for. It also explains why, for LO, the whole thing was just a big strike. Like all economists, in the end, they blamed the workers, saying they weren't ready or conscious enough to struggle for power. But making the working class understand its historic task as the gravedigger of capitalism is the role of the revolutionary party. This also means combating the social backwardness that divides the working class along race lines, something that LO never worried about then—nor does it today.

## VO and the Popular Front

Confronted with maneuvers over a new popular front and whether it would be with or without the PCF, VO supported the May 27 rally at Charléty Stadium that was designed to launch a popular front without the PCF. Thus the 28 May *Voix Ouvrière* described Charléty as a demonstration of 60,000 people "built around 'far leftist' demands" and enthused over the slogan "Séguy, traitor," without mentioning that the same demonstrators started chanting bourgeois politician Mendès-France's name the moment they saw him.

One of the rare times VO talked about the PCF and the SFIO allying with the bourgeoisie, in a 4 June article in *Voix Ouvrière*, they reminded us that the left had already been in power twice, adding:

> "In the aftermath of World War II the Communist Party and the Socialist Party even had, between them, an absolute majority in the elections. But the SP didn't want to govern without the MRP [the bourgeois Popular Republican Movement]. So then the PCF rallied to a three-party alliance in the name of unity. Do we have any reason to believe that this parliamentarist 'left' that has always gone back on its promises would keep them today? No."

VO said there was no reason to believe the popular front's promises, but in reality what the PCF and SP promised was precisely to make an alliance with the bourgeoisie—and that alliance can only be made on the bourgeoisie's own terms, that is, against the interests of the workers. VO never explained that part because, for them, it is not a question of principle or a class question for workers parties to make such an alliance with the bourgeoisie.

After VO and the other organizations were banned, VO reorganized under the


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name Lutte Ouvrière on June 24. Three weeks after their June 4 article, in the first issue of *Lutte Ouvrière*, LO called quasi-explicitly for workers to vote for the very same organizations that were allied with the bourgeoisie or seeking such an alliance. In 2007, at Lutte Ouvrière's Fête, an event they host every year, François Duburg, one of their historic leaders, got offended and denied it when we pointed that out. But here's what LO printed between the two rounds of the 1968 parliamentary elections:

> "It is however plausible that a large number of voters on the left, disgusted by the attitude of the PCF and the FGDS, who scuttled the general strike, may have abstained on the first round. Maybe those people will vote on the second round so they can express, in spite of everything, their opposition to Gaullism in the only way possible in these elections. Then we would see the left's vote count go up. That wouldn't be enough to prevent the UDR [the Gaullist party] from having a majority in the Chamber [the lower house of parliament].
>
> "And that's too bad! It's really a shame that the FGDS and PCF can't rise to power: then their true face as servants of the bourgeoisie would appear clearly before everyone's eyes....
>
> "Yes, it's really too bad that they can't rise to power. And if there's still time the workers, even if they're disappointed, must try to send them there [i.e., elect them] on the second round."

Of course VO wasn't today's LO group that has supported counterrevolution in the USSR and in Poland. But this foreshadows their call to vote "without illusions but without reservations" for François Mitterrand in 1981. Now, with the collapse of the USSR and the sharp decline of the level of consciousness in the working class following the "death of communism" campaign, LO's accommodationism leads them to openly embrace popular-frontism.

As I said, Trotskyists would have called for no vote to the popular-front candidates in the 1968 elections, including members of workers parties running as part of a bourgeois popular front. The fifth issue of the French edition of *Spartacist*, in May 1974, headlined "Not Only a Stupidity, But a Crime" [see "Not Mitterrand, But a Workers Government!" *WV* No. 43, 26 April 1974]. Our article attacked the OCI (Pierre Lambert's organization, a predecessor of the Parti Ouvrier Indépendant) for supporting the Union of the Left's candidate, Mitterrand, in the first round of the presidential elections in 1974. As for us, in 1974, we gave critical support to LO's candidate Arlette Laguiller in the first round because she was running against Mitterrand's popular front, although we warned in advance—and correctly—that LO would probably capitulate to Mitterrand on the second round. In 1977, two years after the Ligue Trotskyste de France was founded, we intervened in the elections calling to abstain except where candidates were running both against the alliance with the bourgeois Left Radicals, and for breaking with the popular front's "Common Program of Government" for managing capitalism.

## Lutte Ouvrière and the Party Question

At the 2008 LO Fête, in a debate between LO and the Pabloites, VO's 1968 call to build a party that would regroup all revolutionaries came up. The first issues of *Lutte Ouvrière*, after VO was dissolved, had long articles calling for all "revolutionaries" to regroup. They would even have looked favorably on forming a greater United Socialist Party based on the platform of the Charléty rally, which was for a popular front without the PCF. (See the article in the 31 May issue of *Voix Ouvrière*, "A 'Third Force' on the Left?") LO argued that thousands of youth and workers were looking for a revolutionary path but were puzzled by the huge number of small groups; "revolutionaries," whether Trotskyist, Maoist or anarchist, had to come together despite their differences because time was getting short; all "revolutionaries" were up against the bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats, and during the strikes they stood arm in arm in spite of their differences. This party had to allow different tendencies to exist, and these tendencies would have the duty to express their differences publicly—in other words it would be a Menshevik party even though they referred to the Bolshevik Party constantly in those articles! Though LO kept talking about the "revolutionary ideas" all these groups shared, not once did they spell out the differences between them, let alone say what political program these groups should unite on.

One can compare that to what Trotsky did in the 1930s, especially from 1933 to 1938, to found the Fourth International. Throughout those years, Trotsky fought over programmatic questions like unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union and intransigent struggle against the popular front, which were at the heart of the debates. The result of these years of struggle—at a time when revolutionary events were unfolding as in Spain and France in 1936—was a rock-solid programmatic basis, the Transitional Program, on which the Fourth International was founded. Clearly, LO's method is quite the opposite of Trotsky's.

LO's call was an extension of the permanent liaison committee of the Pabloites and VO that was created on May 19, which is to say, right at the start of the strike. The program of this permanent committee was also utterly economist and very similar to the CGT's program: a 1,000 franc minimum wage, pay for strike days, union rights in the factories, etc. The only difference from the CGT's demands was that they added the utopian reformist demand "dissolution of the repressive forces of the bourgeois state." At that time, the committee already called on all organizations claiming to be Trotskyist to join it.

Spartacist

**New York, 22 June 1968: Protest against French government's ban of organizations to the left of the Communist Party.**

Our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote about this committee in an article that made the necessary points:

> "The axis upon which the VO-Pabloite unity of action is based is a false one. The joint statement called upon 'all organizations claiming to be Trotskyist to join in this move.' The VO comrades feel the recent events constitute 'the French 1905.' Let us remember that the sequel to the 1905 Russian Revolution was a unification of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks! It took Lenin several years to break this over-fraternal unity."

And we went on:

> "What has been pointed up in France by the latest CP-CGT betrayal is not the need for a 'Trotskyist regroupment' but the need for a new revolutionary party based on the vindicated Bolshevik program, uniting all those, even from such tendencies as the Maoists and syndicalists, who stand in favor of workers' committees of power. We hope that VO, the French Bolsheviks, have not been disoriented as were the Russians in 1905."
>
> —"To the Brink and Back: French Revolution," *Spartacist* No. 12, September-October 1968

The last sentence refers to the fraternal relations we had with VO at the time. We had met VO in 1966 at the London conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International (see *Spartacist* No. 6, June-July 1966). One of our members went to work with VO/LO in France. By the time she came back to the U.S., she had been won over to VO's economist political conceptions. We had a fight about this in the party—you can read the main documents in our pamphlet, *Lutte Ouvrière and Spark: Workerism and National Narrowness* (1988). This fight was against LO's economism, and therefore about the Leninist conception of the party.

## Aftermath of May-June 1968

May '68 had tremendous international repercussions. In Italy the simmering student revolt culminated in the "hot autumn" of 1969. And then in 1974 the Portuguese revolution took place. In both cases a revolutionary party was lacking, and these opportunities were sold out by the Stalinists and the social democrats with the help of the pseudo-revolutionaries. Then a whole lot of social movements arose in many countries. The whole post '68 period was full of turmoil. The Stalinists and the social democrats in France, drawing their own lessons from 1968, went on to form the Union of the Left based on the "Common Program of Government" and succeeded, with the help of the pseudo-revolutionaries, in channeling all the struggles into this popular front until it won the elections in 1981.

May '68 also largely put an end to the left-wing theories that the working class was no longer the revolutionary force in advanced industrial countries. These ideas were widespread during the '60s among young radical activists to the left of the social-democratic parties in Europe and the Democratic Party in the U.S., but the role the working class played in May-June 1968 debunked them. That was part of what allowed us to recruit rapidly in the U.S., which was the basis for the transformation of the SL/U.S. into a fighting propaganda group. Then we were able to lay the basis for our subsequent international expansion.

Immediately after May '68, the Pabloites, LO and the Lambertists recruited considerably. They were the only organizations claiming adherence to Trotskyism in continental Europe that numbered several thousand. This massive post-1968 recruitment is the reason these organizations have survived to this day with a large membership. In the years that followed, these groups moved to the right under the pressure of the second Cold War and the anti-Communist crusade led in France by Mitterrand. They all supported the counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet forces in the 1980s as well as the various popular fronts. Their adaptation to and integration into the popular front today is a reflection, on the national terrain, of their abandoning a revolutionary perspective, which had been expressed on the Russian question.

When you draw the right political conclusions from May-June 1968 you understand that the key question in this pre-revolutionary situation was the question of a party. The task before us today is to reforge the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky, the world party of revolution, and learn the lessons of 1968. That is the task we are pursuing today. Join us! For new October Revolutions!■

# ROTC...

*(continued from page 7)*

comedian Lenny Bruce reportedly faked being gay on board the USS *Brooklyn* during World War II, claiming that he was "attracted physically to a few of the fellows.") Today, enthusiasm for joining the military is one expression of a socially conservative trend in the gay rights milieu, one that seeks bourgeois "respectability" including by embracing patriotism and marital "family values." A statement by OutServe, an underground organization of gay and lesbian active-duty soldiers, exemplifies this patriotic trend: "Today's vote by the Senate is a step forward for America. Today our military is stronger, our nation is stronger" (outserve.org). Organizers of many gay rights demonstrations, including the International Socialist Organization (ISO), have promoted Dan Choi, a West Point graduate who was discharged after coming out on television. Choi, who often campaigned surrounded by American flags, revoltingly propounds the usefulness of gays to the imperialist war machine.

To swim in this stream, the fake-socialist ISO in many of its articles on DADT disappears the repressive nature of the military, while pushing liberal illusions that a mythical "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie can be relied on to fight for gay rights. After joyously gushing over Obama's election in 2008, last October the ISO grumbled that if Obama and the Democrats were "truly the champions of LGBT equality they have so often claimed to be, they would have kept their promises" to end DADT (*Socialist Worker* online, 18 October 2010). Now that Obama and the late majority-Democratic Congress have agreed to overturn DADT, are they now "truly champions of LGBT equality"? No! The Democratic Party, like all bourgeois parties, defends the system of capitalism, which perpetuates the oppression of women and sexual minorities. The ISO channels outrage over anti-gay prejudice and discrimination into impotent pressure politics by telling leftists, workers and youth that the capitalist ruling class can be held "accountable" to their empty proclamations.

What is urgently needed is a revolutionary workers party, organized in opposition to the capitalist Democrats, that would champion the rights of all the oppressed. You cannot end war or the economic conditions that force working-class and minority youth into the military without overturning the capitalist system in which these are rooted. We stand on the model of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, which not only pulled a country out of the first imperialist world war but also eliminated all laws against homosexuality. As we stated in our article, "Marxism, Militarism and War" (*WV* No. 857, 28 October 2005), "As Marxists, our goal is not just to get ROTC and military recruiters off campus for now, but to win students to the struggle to organize the social power of the working class for socialist revolution to get rid of imperialist militarism, and the capitalist system it serves, once and for all."■

# Ontario...

*(continued from page 3)*

round of broader anti-worker attacks.

Gerstenberger and the Local 1005 leadership have repeatedly called on the Canadian government to nationalize U.S. Steel. To hear Gerstenberger talk about "the arrogance and contempt the global monopolies hold for Canadian workers, our socialised economy and sovereignty" (*Workers' Forum*, February 2011), you'd think capitalist Canada was some kind of socialist paradise.

The pro-NDP "socialist" groups that populate the Canadian left apologize for, or openly propound, the same nationalist protectionism. The Maple Leaf patriots of the Communist Party of Canada (CP) claim that the current struggle is "about having a domestic industry to produce steel for Canadian manufacturing...or Canadian sovereignty and independence by another name" (*People's Voice*, 1-14 February). The International Socialists mouth a few words against Canadian nationalism, but two years ago this group declared: "We must demand that the government keep steel production local" (*Socialist Worker*, 16 March 2009). While the CP calls to "Nationalize US Steel operations in Hamilton," the I.S. pleads for the "nationalization and retooling of factories."

Capitalist nationalization schemes have long been used by capitalist governments to pay off failing bosses and blunt working-class discontent. The 2009 bailouts of GM and Chrysler—which amounted to partial nationalizations—came directly at the workers' expense, and thanks to them the companies are again raking in the profits.

The union misleaders sell workers the lie that a Canadian boss is better than an American (or Japanese or German), that protectionist tariffs and nationalization schemes will protect jobs, stop plant closures and maintain wages and benefits. But protectionism means joining with the enemy class to shore up their profits, profits extracted from the labour of working people be they in Canada, the U.S. or elsewhere. Moreover, nationalizing the *least* efficient capitalist operations is in a sense the exact opposite of socialist expropriation. Socialist economic planning under the rule of the working class is based precisely on appropriating from the capitalists the *most advanced* means of production. As Trotsky explained in the Transitional Program, the Marxist program of expropriating the capitalist bloodsuckers is counterposed to "the muddle-headed reformist slogan of 'nationalization'" and must be linked to the struggle for working-class power.

The entire history of the steel industry in Hamilton, going back more than a century, explodes the view that Canadian bosses are "nice guy" friends of the working people. Hamilton was long known as Steel Town and over the years the city's steel barons included William Southam, publisher of the *Spectator*, who built his newspaper empire on steel profits, and Hugh G. Hilton, the union-hating engineer memorialized in Stelco's massive Hilton Works. For decades, tens of thousands of workers toiled in the brutally hot and dangerous steel mills for the profits of a tiny group of Canadian capitalists. Far from a "national treasure," for almost 100 years Stelco brutalized its workers, denied them benefits, robbed them of their pay and fired workers, especially union militants and the foreign-born, at will.

It was the 1946 strike against Stelco that won union recognition and a 40-hour workweek. The strike was part of a broader postwar upsurge of class struggle. Proletarian solidarity as well as militant tactics were key to the union's struggle. The company moved in an army of scabs to keep the mill going. But Stelco couldn't move the steel through the picket lines. And even when the picket lines were breached and steel was loaded on to a freighter, dockers in Montreal wouldn't touch the scab steel, so it sat on the *Selkirk* until the strike was over. The company failed to drive out the union, its fundamental goal, and the strike ended in victory.

National Photography Collection

**1946 Stelco strike won union recognition and a 40-hour workweek. Proletarian solidarity and militant tactics were key to union victory.**

Stelco wasn't the only game in town, however. Side by side with the Hilton Works is Dofasco, originally Dominion Steel, founded in 1912. Dofasco was bought out by the European-based ArcelorMittal, the largest steelmaker in the world, in 2006, just before U.S. Steel bought out Stelco. The USW has several times tried, without success, to organize Dofasco, which remains non-union to this day. A win against U.S. Steel could mark a revival of the "spirit of 1946" and give a boost to the struggle to unionize this and other non-union plants.

## Down With Anti-Communist China-Bashing!

Leo Gerard, the international president of USW based in Pittsburgh and formerly the union's Canadian national director, works hand-in-glove with the steel companies in a campaign to "Buy American" (modified when he's in Canada to "Buy North American"). Deeply chauvinist, "Buy American" has done nothing for American workers, as shown by the dead steel plants and massive unemployment running from Pittsburgh to Buffalo and Chicago. The American capitalists' destruction of basic industry has especially devastated the black proletariat. Deindustrialization has also pitted Canadian workers against American, and workers from both countries against working people abroad.

The USW bureaucracy's main target has been China, now the largest steel producer (and consumer) in the world. The union tops complain that Ottawa has failed to protect the Canadian steel industry from Chinese imports. This is a direct echo of the campaigns of the North American steel bosses. A recent study by a right-wing Toronto think tank, the Munk Centre, laments that Chinese steel production does not operate in a "competitive domestic market environment," but has "very close relations to government agencies" ("The Importance of Steel Manufacturing to Canada," May 2010). In its own way, this pays tribute to China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state with a collectivized economy that is not based on production for private profit.

Playing the bosses' game against China is particularly deadly for workers. The Peoples Republic of China was forged through the defeat of imperialist-backed rule in the 1949 Revolution. Thanks to its collectivized economy, it has brought hundreds of millions of workers and peasants out of dire poverty into social production and a vast advance in living standards. With their nationalist agitation against China, the union bureaucrats are making an anti-Communist alliance with the Canadian and American capitalist rulers against the gains of the 1949 Revolution.

Albeit on different scales, both the industrial unions in North America and the workers state in China are the fruits of historic victories for the proletariat. One resulted from the massive struggles of the 1930s and 1940s, the other from the expropriation of capitalist class rule in the 1949 Revolution. Both must be defended unconditionally from attacks that seek to undo these gains, despite the fact that each is led by a bureaucratic layer that puts the gains in jeopardy. The bureaucratic misleaders of the unions here must be driven from their positions of leadership and replaced by a class-struggle leadership committed to the overthrow of the imperialist order through socialist revolution. The bureaucratic caste in China must be ousted by a proletarian political revolution to preserve and expand the working-class property forms established following the Chinese Revolution.

## Workers Need Their Own Revolutionary Party!

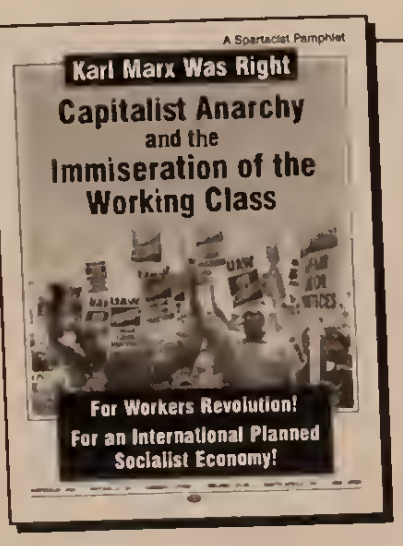
The 1946 Stelco strike came as the anti-Soviet Cold War witchhunt of Communist Party supporters from the unions was heating up. During the 1940s and 1950s, the labour tops waged vicious anti-red purges, in which the USW bureaucracy played a central role, that saw many of the most militant workers driven out of the unions. Integral to this, the aspirations of struggling workers were channeled into the social-democratic Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, predecessor of the NDP.

While organizationally independent of the bourgeois parties, the NDP has a thoroughly pro-capitalist, nationalist program. When they are in power, from B.C. and Ontario in the 1990s to Manitoba today, they frontally attack the working class and the poor. Just over two years ago, the union tops were prominent supporters of the campaign for a Liberal-NDP coalition. More recently, the federal NDP has been assiduously propping up the minority government of the deeply anti-working-class and very right-wing Harper Conservatives.

To mobilize as one against the class enemy, it is imperative that the working class combat all manifestations of capitalist oppression—in defense of minorities, women's rights, youth. The USW Local 1005 bureaucrats' flag-waving declaration that "Canadians Stand as One!" is the antithesis of this perspective. Most perniciously, such slogans feed into the Anglo chauvinism wielded against the Québécois, whose national subjugation remains a major barrier to united working-class struggle. We advocate independence for Quebec in order to fight Anglo chauvinism and lay the basis for making clear to the workers of both English Canada and Quebec that their enemies are their own respective capitalists, not each other. "Canadian unity" nationalism, which is particularly promoted in the labour movement by the NDP, in turn drives Québécois workers into the arms of their own class enemies, represented by the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois and Bloc Québécois.

The union movement must also stand unequivocally on the side of immigrants, who often bring traditions of militant struggle into labour's increasingly multiracial ranks and are more and more under attack in this reactionary climate. A fight must be waged for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and against deportations. Such struggles can set the stage for the mobilization in common struggle of workers at home and abroad.

The fight to rebuild the unions as instruments of proletarian struggle is closely tied to the need for a multiracial, binational revolutionary workers party. That requires, above all, a political struggle against the social-democratic NDP and for a new class-struggle leadership of the unions. Against the tired and failed strategies pushed by liberals and fake socialists—from the Keynesian project of "benevolent" intervention by the capitalist state to the British Labour Party's bourgeois nationalizations in the post-World War II period—we Marxists understand that no amount of tinkering with the existing system can wrench it into serving the needs of the proletariat and the oppressed. There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialized economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want. It is to this end that the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League, devotes all its resources.■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# Libya...

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That rogue's gallery includes Qaddafi's former "justice" minister, as well as his former interior minister and head of the special forces. Of four former generals who have gone over to the opposition, two had been at Qaddafi's side since he took power 42 years ago!

There is no doubt that Qaddafi is a butcher of his "own" citizens. This is also the case with the many kings, sheiks and colonels who have benefited from U.S. military aid. After America's puppet regime in Iraq killed at least 29 people demonstrating for jobs and services on February 25, a U.S. military spokesman lauded the Iraqi forces' "response" to the protest as "professional and restrained." The military intervention by U.S.-backed Saudi Arabia in support of the Sunni monarchy in Bahrain demonstrates that, in the eyes of the U.S. imperialists, Bahrain's Shi'ite majority is less than human, with no rights they are bound to respect. In recent years, the Libyan government has actively collaborated in the imperialists' "war on terror" and introduced neoliberal privatization schemes. The imperialists are now shedding crocodile tears about the death toll in Libya only because they have not always enjoyed such civil relations with Qaddafi's regime.

Not least of the crimes of the Qaddafi regime has been its racist treatment of black African migrant workers, who are subjected to arbitrary arrest and deportation—and at times outright pogromist attacks—while being used as scapegoats for unemployment and other ills. Currently, workers from sub-Saharan Africa are being set upon by both pro- and anti-Qaddafi forces, the latter of which often accuse them of being mercenaries for the regime. Over 100 black African migrants are feared dead and thousands are in hiding or seeking to flee the country.

As revolutionary Marxists, we have always staunchly opposed Qaddafi's brutal rule while standing for military defense of Libya against imperialist attack. In March 1986, the international Spartacist tendency (precursor to the International Communist League) sent a journalistic team to Tripoli as U.S. warships and planes were attacking Libyan forces in and around the Gulf of Sidra. Our purpose, as we wrote in a telegram to the Libyan government, was to express our support for the "just cause of Libyan independence and territorial integrity." Within days of our delegation's visit, President Ronald Reagan launched bombing raids on Tripoli and Benghazi, killing scores of civilians. One of the victims was Qaddafi's infant daughter, who was killed when his compound was targeted. For the Cold Warriors of the Reagan administration, a primary "crime" of the Qaddafi regime was that it was a military client of the Soviet Union.

Our team reported from Tripoli: "The memory of bloody imperialist rampage and spoliation is burned into the Libyan masses" (see "Under Reagan's Guns in Libya: Report from Tripoli," *WV* No. 401, 11 April 1986). Our reporters made the point that the Turko-Italian war of 1911, in which thousands of Arabs were butchered, was a barbaric conflict over the possession of what would become Libya. For the first time in a war, airplanes were used against a population whose most advanced form of military transport was camels. It was, as Lenin called it, "a perfected, civilised bloodbath, the massacre of Arabs with the help of the 'latest' weapons" ("The End of the Italo-Turkish War," 28 September 1912). That conflict set off a 20-year resistance struggle, centered in the east, against the Italian imperialists. Italian forces dropped poison gas bombs on civilians and imprisoned more than 100,000 in concentration camps, where up to 70,000 people—nearly half the population of Cyrenaica—died of disease and starvation.

During World War II, both Axis and Allied troops ravaged the country and its people. Following the war, the imperialists created an independent Libya by joining together three distinct regions: Cyrenaica in the east, Tripolitania in the west and Fezzan in the south. Italian rule was replaced with a British-imposed monarchy. It is the flag of that pre-Qaddafi regime that is prominently displayed today by opposition forces.

Those imperialist-backed forces have the willing and avid support of the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), which at the outset of the conflict embraced the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, an outfit founded in the early 1980s with start-up capital supplied by the CIA and the Saudi royal family. Presenting Qaddafi as someone with whom the imperialists feel "they can do business," the ISO ludicrously lauded the National Front as "less likely to be so pliable" (*Socialist Worker*, 24 February). Day after day, representatives of opposition forces parleyed with U.S. and European officials and issued pleas for the imperialists to impose a "no-fly zone," launch air strikes, arm the rebels or otherwise intervene militarily in Libya. Utterly exposed, the ISO tried to backtrack, declaring in *Socialist Worker* (9 March): "The CIA-backed National Front for the Salvation of Libya is an unsurprising advocate of U.S. action."

Equally unsurprising is the fact that the ISO lined up with the imperialists against Qaddafi's bourgeois regime. From supporting the CIA-backed, woman-hating, anti-Soviet *mujahedin* forces in Afghanistan and cheering the destruction of the USSR to lending its voice to the imperialist chorus against the deformed workers states of China and North Korea, the ISO, born of social-democratic anti-Communism, has always been squarely in the camp of "democratic" imperialism.

Writing in *Socialist Worker* (28 February), Todd Chretien derides the Workers World Party (WWP) and Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) for refusing "to take a stand with the Libyan people against a dictator." While opposing imperialist intervention in Libya, the WWP and PSL are mainly driven by their longstanding political support for any and all forces in Third World countries that make a pretense of being "anti-imperialist." This has included everyone from bourgeois-nationalist rulers like Qaddafi and Venezuela's Hugo Chávez—who along with Cuba's Fidel Castro is supporting Qaddafi in the current conflict—to reactionary Islamists like Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and Hamas in Gaza.

*Workers World* (12 March) goes so far as to praise "Libya's record on human rights," citing a section of a January 4 UN report that summarized the testimony of ***the Libyan delegation!*** The PSL, for its part, is disappointed in how yesterday's "anti-imperialist" Qaddafi has turned out. *Liberation* (24 February) refuses to characterize his bonapartist regime as capitalist, complaining only that the government "included bourgeois forces" that were strengthened "over time."

Lastly, mention should be made of David North's Socialist Equality Party (SEP), best known as the "World Socialist Web Site," whose propaganda today appears rather critical of Qaddafi and states opposition to imperialist military intervention. We urge any readers who take the SEP's "Marxism" for good coin to take a closer look at these political bandits, who comprise a special category in the annals of renegades from Trotskyism.

The SEP self-servingly disappears its history as participants in the squalid pro-Qaddafi machinations carried out by the dominant party in its "International Committee of the Fourth International" (IC), the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain led by one Gerry Healy. After years of hailing the mythical "Arab Revolution," Healy's IC openly championed blood-drenched bourgeois regimes like Qaddafi's. Healy's embrace of Qaddafi coincided with the reappearance of a Healyite daily paper, *News Line*, in England in May 1976, two months after his previous daily, *Workers Press*, had folded. In "Healyites, Messengers of Qaddafi" (*WV* No. 158, 20 May 1977), we noted of Qaddafi's Libya, "where communists are to be jailed and butchered and their books burned, ostensible leftists would have to do some pretty peculiar things to survive—and *News Line* has made it clear the WRP would be more than willing to do them." The Healyites went on to hail the murder of Iraqi Communist Party members by Saddam Hussein in 1979.

As we wrote in "Healyism Implodes" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86): "It has been perfectly clear for some time that the Healy/Banda organization has been a captive creature of despotic 'Third World' capitalist regimes which have the blood of the workers and peasants on their hands." This was a logical application of the WRP's adulation for "anti-imperialist" Arab rulers combined with its vicious anti-Sovietism. The *Spartacist* article noted: "Once you discard the struggle for the building of Leninist parties to lead the working class in the liberation of mankind, and take off in search of get-rich-quick schemes, you will end up in a despicable place—if not a Healy, perhaps the more ordinary kind of scoundrel voting war credits for his own ruling class."

For our part, we struggle for the political independence of the proletariat from all bourgeois forces. A fundamental difference between the events in Libya and the popular upsurges in Tunisia and Egypt is that in the latter two countries there is a powerful, concentrated working class that has emerged as an active force. However, the workers organizations are subordinated to one or another bourgeois political force. Marxists must fight for the proletariat, the only class with the social power to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to come to the fore to lead all the oppressed in a revolutionary assault on the capitalist system.

The Libyan proletariat has clearly been devastated in the current conflict, as migrant workers—a major component of the working class in that country—have fled the chaos, armed violence and racist attacks en masse. The future of the Libyan masses will be decided by working-class struggle that extends beyond the national terrain to include the proletariats of Algeria, Tunisia and, especially, Egypt. That requires the forging of revolutionary working-class parties as part of a genuine Trotskyist Fourth International, which would link the fight for socialist federations of North Africa and of the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers.■

Reuters

Young Spartacus

**Tripoli, April 1986: Libyan rescue workers sift through rubble of an apartment building after U.S. bombing attack.**

**Right: March 1986 Berkeley protest against Reagan administration's war provocations.**

Libyan Studies Centre

**Tripoli after air raid during World War II.**

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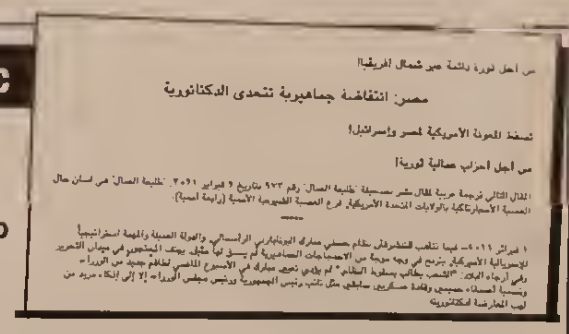

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WORKERS VANGUARD

# Imperialists Hands Off Libya!

AFP photos

**Left: Rally in support of Libyan strongman Qaddafi outside Tripoli, March 11. Right: Supporters of Libyan opposition in Benghazi call for imperialist intervention, March 13.**

MARCH 15—The opposition in Libya to the decades-long rule of bourgeois strongman Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi appears to have taken the form, for now, of a low-intensity civil war, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions, between the Tripoli-centered government and imperialist-backed opposition forces concentrated in the country's eastern areas. Leadership of the anti-Qaddafi opposition includes Islamists, tribal leaders, former generals of Qaddafi's army and former officials of his blood-soaked regime. Much of Libya's diplomatic corps has defected to the opposition. Marxists presently have no side in this conflict, which is essentially a struggle to decide who will control the country's immense oil and gas wealth while lording it over the exploited and oppressed masses.

The world proletariat does have a side, however, in opposing any intervention into Libya by the imperialists, who are backing the anti-Qaddafi forces. In the U.S., those beating the drums for imposing a "no-fly zone" over Libya span the gamut from Republican John McCain to Democrats Bill Clinton and John Kerry. If implemented, that would mean a direct military assault against Libya's air force and air defenses. Washington has positioned a pair of amphibious assault vessels off the Libyan coast, reportedly to be joined by the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise*, while the United Nations Security Council imposed an arms embargo on Libya and tens of billions in Libyan assets held in foreign banks have been frozen. As Marxist opponents of the capitalist-imperialist order, we oppose all imperialist sanctions against the Qaddafi regime. In the event of imperialist attack against neocolonial Libya, the proletariat internationally must stand for the military defense of that country while giving no political support to Qaddafi's capitalist regime.

Particularly given the turmoil in North Africa and the Near East, the imperialists are somewhat between a rock and a hard place when dealing with Libya under Qaddafi, whose forces have been turning back the rebels. While insisting that "all options are on the table," the Obama administration has shied away from being drawn into a possible quagmire in Libya when U.S. imperialism's military forces are already stretched thin by their murderous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

French president Nicolas Sarkozy has officially declared the opposition National Council, based in the eastern city of Benghazi, to be Libya's "legitimate" government. The Arab League joined the Near East's erstwhile colonial masters, Great Britain and France, in calling for imposing a "no-fly zone" over Libya. Britain's cause was not exactly helped by Tory prime minister David Cameron's Monty Python moment, when a Special Air Service mission to contact the Libyan opposition ended in debacle, with the rebels detaining the delegation and promptly dispatching it from the country. At a meeting of the G8 in Paris today, German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle put cold water on talk of a "no-fly zone," declaring that Germany did not want to "get sucked into a war in north Africa" (London *Guardian*, 15 March).

Just as the *New York Times* retailed the Bush administrations' lies of Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction" in the lead-up to the 2003 U.S. invasion, the bourgeois media quickly took on the role of press agents for the anti-Qaddafi opposition, making "facts" fit the imperialists' agenda. Gruesome stories put out by the opposition about Qaddafi's fighter jets deliberately bombing civilians were widely reported as fact. Virtually unreported was the March 2 admission by Defense Secretary Robert Gates that "we've seen no confirmation whatsoever" of those accounts. Meanwhile, the media has delicately refrained from going into the sordid pasts of the former Qaddafi loyalists in the leadership of the opposition forces in Benghazi.

*continued on page 11*

# Anti-Muslim Witchhunt on Capitol Hill

## Down With Bipartisan "War on Terror"!

In a blatant escalation of the "anti-terror" witchhunt, New York Republican Peter King, the newly minted chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security, last week staged the first of a promised series of Congressional hearings into the "radicalization" of Muslim Americans. While for King the televised proceedings served as political theater to paint the Democrats as soft on "terror," the hearings not surprisingly inspired panic among Muslims in the U.S., who from the onset of the "war on terror" have been in the crosshairs of the capitalist rulers. During his testimony, Minnesota Democrat Keith Ellison, the first Muslim elected to Congress, touched a raw nerve as he tearfully retold the story of a Muslim paramedic/police cadet who died trying to help rescue victims in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, only to have his name fall under suspicion that he was involved in the attack.

Notorious for his anti-Muslim bigotry, King authored *Vale of Tears*, a novel in which a New York Congressman (!) convinces reluctant Muslims to spill the beans on an Al Qaeda plan to bomb New York City. In comparison to this yahoo, the Democrats cynically posture as defenders of religious tolerance and civil liberties. But their main role in the hearings was to offer a more effective means of carrying out repression in the name of fighting "terror." Ellison, seconded by L.A. County sheriff Lee Baca, criticized the widely publicized proceedings as serving to dry up sources of intelligence from Muslims.

The Democrats have in fact worked in tandem with the Republicans from the onset of the "war on terror," with at least 22 bipartisan House and Senate committee hearings on domestic "violent Islamist extremism" in the last five years alone. As U.S. imperialist Commander-in-Chief, Barack Obama has continued and expanded many of the repressive measures introduced under George W. Bush. Just last week, the White House entirely backed down on Obama's celebrated promise to close the prison in Guantánamo Bay, ordering the resumption of military tribunals there and reaffirming the policy of indefinite detention of terror suspects. Nothing new here: During World War II, liberal icon Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans. Today, the Democrats worry that King's modern-day Inquisition is counterproductive to the "national interest," threatening to further inflame Muslim populations reeling from the havoc wreaked by the U.S.-led occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

With Democratic politicians and liberal editorialists routinely connecting King's hearings with the Cold War witchhunts under Joe McCarthy, it is worth recalling that McCarthy's bourgeois critics agreed with him that Communism was the "enemy within," but thought that he overreached by gunning for "innocent" liberals along with the "guilty." Today, Islamic fundamentalists like Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda are surrogates for the "Red menace," invoked to justify domestic repression and imperialist militarism. But it was U.S. imperialism that promoted the forces of Islamic reaction against the Soviet degenerated workers state during the Cold War. In the 1980s, the CIA massively armed and funded the *mujahedin* in Afghanistan—including bin Laden—to kill Soviet troops defending a modernizing nationalist government that had enacted reforms on behalf of women and others. Once the U.S. no longer had any use for them, these fundamentalists—Washington's Dr. Frankenstein's monster—turned on their former patron.

With the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon approaching, anti-Muslim mania is likely to find renewed fervor. As a Spartacist League/U.S. Political Bureau statement issued the day after the attacks noted:

> "The ruling parties—Democrats and Republicans—are all too eager to be able to wield the bodies of those who were killed and wounded in order to reinforce capitalist class rule. It's an opportunity for the exploiters to peddle 'one nation indivisible' patriotism to try to direct the burgeoning anger at the bottom of this society away from themselves and toward an indefinable foreign 'enemy,' as well as immigrants in the U.S., and to reinforce their arsenal of domestic state repression against all the working people."
>
> —*WV* No. 764, 14 September 2001

Indeed, the government went on to carry out a massive attack on the democratic rights of the population as a whole, while invoking "national security" as a club against striking New Jersey teachers, West Coast longshoremen and other trade unionists. This underscores the need to oppose all attempts by the capitalist rulers to augment the forces of state repression, which are aimed at suppressing the struggles of workers and the oppressed and propping up this decaying, racist capitalist order. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 977 1 April 2011


# War Against Qaddafi's Libya: Imperialist Terror and Lies

MARCH 29—For the past week and a half, U.S., British and French imperialist forces have pounded the semicolonial country of Libya with a brutal air bombardment and sea-based missile attacks. In attacking the military defenses of bourgeois strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi's regime, the imperialist coalition is attempting to clear the way for the Libyan opposition—a motley bunch that includes monarchists, tribal leaders, Islamists, CIA assets, defecting military officers and former regime officials —to advance toward territory held by Qaddafi.

Barack Obama and his French and British allies self-righteously proclaim that their military intervention into this oil-rich country is for the purpose of "protecting civilians"—the cover provided by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council. The U.S. military, parroted by its agents in the bourgeois press, routinely lies that the "precision" strikes have singed nary a hair on the head of a civilian. Just three days into the air war, Libyan villagers were shot by U.S. Marines retrieving a pilot whose jet crashed outside Benghazi. The civilian toll is sure to mount with the continuation of operations, now under NATO command. Once again, the imperial presidency has launched a war without Congress voting to declare war; the last time the White House thus adhered to the Constitution was in World War II. Asked whether the U.S. mission, which Obama refrains from calling a war, will be over by the end of the year, Defense Secretary Robert Gates replied, "I don't think anybody knows the answer to that."

As noted in the International Communist League statement printed below, what had essentially been a civil war between Qaddafi's Tripoli-centered bourgeois regime and an imperialist-backed opposition based in the east of the country—a conflict in which the proletariat had no side—became subordinated to imperialist military intervention with the start of the bombing on March 19. In the present conflict, the workers of the world have a side: military defense of semicolonial Libya against imperialism and the opposition forces, which are acting on the imperialists' behalf. As revolutionary leader V. I. Lenin explained in *Socialism and War* (1915): "If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just,' and 'defensive' wars, ***irrespective*** of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory against the oppressor, slaveholding and predatory 'Great' Powers."

Getty (inset), Reuters

**Bomb attack on Libya, March 20. Inset: March 24 Pentagon briefing, as imperialists continue to pound away in support of their front men in anti-Qaddafi opposition.**

### Imperialist Brigands, Media Flacks

An official of the North Korean bureaucratically deformed workers state made the utterly rational statement that Libya's dismantling of its nuclear weapons program had made it vulnerable to military intervention by the West (*New Yark Times*, 24 March). Thanks to that intervention, which began eight years to the day after the U.S.-led "shock and awe" assault on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the rebels have recaptured much of the territory they had earlier lost to the Libyan government. Nevertheless, as we go to press, Qaddafi's forces have repulsed the rebels' attack on his hometown of Surt.

Just as the *New Yark Times* retailed Washington's lies about Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction," the capitalist press is demonstrating again over Libya that truth is the first casualty of war. Lurid tales—none verified—of a mass slaughter of Libyan civilians in the east were wielded as the *casus belli*. The same *Times* editors who retail the line that the Western attack is about defending helpless people were the ones who did Washington's bidding by knowingly suppressing the fact that Raymond Davis, the man arrested in Pakistan earlier this year for killing two men, was working for the CIA.

The imperialist powers did not get where they are by protecting civilians, but by slaughtering those standing in the way of their quest for profit and world domination—and by providing money, arms and "advisers" for their colonial and

*continued on page 6*

# Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!

## Statement of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

*The following statement was issued on March 20.*

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) calls on workers around the world to take a stand for military defense of semicolonial Libya against the attack begun yesterday by a coalition of rapacious imperialist governments. The French, British and U.S. rulers, in league with other imperialist governments and with the blessings of the sheiks, kings and military bonapartists of the Arab League, wasted not a moment in acting on the green light given by the United Nations Security Council on Thursday to slaughter countless innocent people in the name of "protecting civilians" and ensuring "democracy." French air strikes were quickly followed by U.S. and British missile attacks, while Egypt's military regime is providing arms to the Benghazi opposition forces. From Indochina and the Korean peninsula to the U.S.-led occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan today, the "democratic" imperialist rulers wade in the blood of millions upon millions of their victims. Recall that Britain and France historically carried out untold massacres in the Near East, Africa and the Indian subcontinent in order to pursue their colonial subjugation of those areas. Recall that Italy, now providing the use of its air bases for the attack, is responsible for the deaths of up to half the population of Cyrenaica in eastern Libya during its colonial rule prior to World War II.

Prior to the current attack, the conflict in Libya had taken the form of a low-intensity civil war, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions, between the Tripoli-centered government of strongman Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi and imperialist-backed opposition forces concentrated in the country's eastern areas. *Workers Vanguard* No. 976 (18 March), newspaper of the U.S. section of the ICL, noted that "Marxists presently have no side in this conflict." But as the article continued: "In the event of imperialist attack against neocolonial Libya, the proletariat internationally must stand for the military defense of that country while giving no political support to Qaddafi's capitalist regime." The civil war in Libya has now been subordinated to the fight of a neocolonial country against imperialism. Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step toward their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression. ***Defend Libya***

*continued an page 7*

# On Laos

24 January

The latest issue of *Workers Vanguard* (No. 972) reprints an article ["Thailand: For a Workers and Peasants Government!"] from *Australasian Spartacist* (No. 211) that inexplicably characterizes Laos as a "deformed workers state". It is my understanding that Laos, like Cambodia, never became a deformed workers state due to its extreme economic backwardness, almost nonexistent proletariat, devastation under US imperialist bombing, and anti-working class Stalinist leadership.

Joel

27 January

To the editors,

I think you owe the readers an explanation why you never before (to my knowledge) considered Laos a workers state.

H.F.

28 January

I read a WV article last nite on the situation in Thailand. In the article, it states that there is some sort of deformed workers state in Laos. I have never read anything about this in the past, including in the WV, which I have been reading closely for decades. Could the WV elaborate on this, as I think that readers would be interested in learning about this. By the way, the article was very good.

N. B.

***WV* replies:**

After internal discussion, a recent gathering of the International Communist League codified that Laos is, and has been since the victory of the Indochinese Revolution, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The Pathet Lao guerrilla insurgents gained state power in Laos several weeks after the 30 April 1975 seizure of Saigon, capital of South Vietnam, by the forces of the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front. The liberation of Saigon marked the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution against U.S. imperialism and its South Vietnamese puppet regime.

After the Pathet Lao took power, the Spartacus Youth League, then the youth organization of the Spartacist League/U.S., wrote: "With its predominantly feudal and even pre-feudal tribal relations of production, a Laotian state established by the Stalinists would tend to lean on and take on the social character of the neighboring more advanced Vietnamese and Chinese deformed workers states" (*Young Spartacus* No. 33, June 1975). In power, the Laotian Stalinists went on to establish a regime based on proletarian property forms, in conjunction with Vietnam. We explained two years later in "Cambodia: Peasant Stalinism Run Amok" (*WV* No. 180, 4 November 1977) that what happened in Laos was akin to Soviet Central Asia and Mongolia in the decade following the October Revolution, where peasant and nomadic societies were absorbed into the Russian economy. However, in subsequent years we failed to codify this understanding.

Laos is based on a collectivized economy but ruled by a nationalist bureaucratic caste under the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. While in recent years the Stalinist regime has enacted a series of "market reforms" following the examples of China and Vietnam, the class character of the state remains the same.

Trotskyists unconditionally militarily defend such workers states—which also include China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We also fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the parasitic, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose program of "socialism in one country" undermines the defense of the workers states and means conciliating the imperialist powers that are intent on their destruction. In the case of Laos, which has only a tiny proletariat, this perspective is integrally tied to the fight for political revolution in Vietnam as well as China. In all cases, development toward socialism is dependent on proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers, such as Japan and the U.S.

Under Pol Pot's Stalinist Khmer Rouge, Cambodia fared differently than Laos. As the U.S. imperialists were being routed in Vietnam, Pol Pot, at the head of a peasant army, seized control of neighboring Cambodia, which had also suffered years of U.S. carpet bombing and destruction. We initially characterized Cambodia as a deformed workers state while noting that "the contradictory character of Stalinism was nowhere more graphically revealed than in the actions of the victorious Cambodian peasant army marching into Phnom Penh not to liberate the poor and working people but rather to brutally impose an immediate and total depopulation of the city" (*WV* No. 72, 4 July 1975).

Indeed, Pol Pot's murderous horror brought Cambodia to the brink of extinction, razing the cities, destroying the tiny proletariat and forcing virtually the entire population into barely disguised labor camps at the most primitive subsistence level. As we later wrote: "Pol Pot's Cambodia was never a workers state, even deformed.... The ideology of Pol Pot & Co. was the antithesis of the program of communists for whom industrialization and technological progress lay the material basis for the free and full development of human potential in a socialist society of plenty for all" (*WV* No. 692, 5 June 1998).

In the winter of 1978-79, Vietnam, seeking to end Khmer Rouge border attacks, invaded Cambodia, liberating the Cambodian people from the death grip of Pol Pot's forces. Washington, in its vindictive drive to punish Vietnam for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Indochina, seized on this invasion to side with the Khmer Rouge. For more than 10 years, Vietnamese troops defended the People's Republic of Kampuchea against the CIA's murderous Cambodian allies. However, in 1989 Soviet leader Gorbachev, in his treacherous and futile drive to appease imperialism, joined the imperialists in pressuring his Vietnamese ally to cut a deal with the Khmer Rouge. In September 1989, the last detachment of Vietnamese troops left Cambodia, opening the way for the return of the imperialists and the king. Cambodia is a bourgeois state under a constitutional monarchy.■

TROTSKY

LENIN

## On Defense of Dependent Countries Against Imperialism

*As the U.S., France and Britain lead the murderous bombing campaign against semi-colonial Libya in the name of "protecting civilians," social-democratic groups beat the drums for the Libyan "opposition," the imperialists' front men on the ground. Writing on the need for proletarian revolution to rid the world of imperialist war, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky insisted that the working class must militarily defend oppressed nations under imperialist attack and excoriated the League of Nations, predecessor to the United Nations under whose imprimatur the war against Libya was begun.*

Capitalist brigands always conduct a "defensive" war, even when Japan is marching against Shanghai and France against Syria or Morocco. The revolutionary proletariat distinguishes only between ***wars of oppression*** and ***wars of liberation***. The character of a war is defined, not by diplomatic falsifications, but by the class which conducts the war and the objective aims it pursues in that war. The wars of the imperialist states, apart from the pretexts and political rhetoric, are of an oppressive character, reactionary and inimical to the people. Only the wars of the proletariat and of the oppressed nations can be characterized as wars of liberation....

The League of Nations is the citadel of imperialist pacifism. It represents a transitory historical combination of capitalist states in which the stronger command and buy out the weaker, then crawl on their bellies before America or try to resist; in which all equally are enemies of the Soviet Union, but are prepared to cover up each and every crime of the most powerful and rapacious among them. Only the politically blind, only those who are altogether helpless or who deliberately corrupt the conscience of the people, can consider the League of Nations, directly or indirectly, today or tomorrow, an instrument of peace....

Whoever directly or indirectly supports the system of colonization and protectorates, the domination of British capital in India, the domination of Japan in Korea or in Manchuria, of France in Indochina or in Africa, whoever does not fight against colonial enslavement, whoever does not support the uprisings of the oppressed nations and their independence, whoever defends or idealizes Gandhism, that is, the policy of passive resistance on questions which can be solved only by force of arms, is, despite good intentions or bad, a lackey, an apologist, an agent of the imperialists, of the slaveholders, of the militarists, and helps them to prepare new wars in pursuit of their old aims or new.

—Leon Trotsky, "Declaration to the Antiwar Congress at Amsterdam" (July 1932)

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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**No. 977** **1 April 2011**

# Union vs. Management in NYC Transit

20 March 2011

I have worked for New York City Transit for nearly 10 years and I have found that although my job is enjoyable, I dislike the bureaucracy from both management and the union. When I first started working for MTA I was excited to be part of a union and a company that I felt was vital to New York City. I quickly learned that I didn't work for a company that supported you as a worker and that the atmosphere was definitely union against management mentality. Mistakes are disciplined by money being taken out of your pockets (days in the street). Management send their watchdogs on the roads to make sure that you're doing your job and I often found that any wrong move could get me unpaid days. I realized that it clearly was a union vs. management environment (my first experience in a situation like this) and as a train operator I of course sided with the union. In 2005 we went on strike to fight against an attack on our pension and I like many other of my fellow workers were ready to stay out for as long as necessary to get what we felt was right for us. Unfortunately our union leaders sold us out and sent us back to work without a contract. I felt lost, helpless and angry at my union and my job because I was ready to sacrifice everything including my family for a struggle; and the leadership that I trusted to represent me had betrayed me. Now here I am in 2011 still working for the MTA and although I was angry at my union for years after the strike, I realize that my union is my home and I will always stand by the union. I read about how Gov. Cuomo (Democrat and supposed friend of labor) and the capitalists speak about how union workers are somehow overprivileged. If I were to retire today my pension would be about 35k per year. I really would like to know how that is living some kind of high life. Let's not forget that due to the amount of steel dust and noise that I'm subjected to on a daily basis, the quality of my life after retirement may not be so well. Many of my co-workers have died a few short years after working in transit which is often an environment that is very unsafe and hazardous. It is so clear that capitalists are out to attack the proletariat as there is little mention of how Barack Obama (leader of the Capitalist regime and Democrat) continues to bailout companies and send out his war machine overseas with billions of dollars. The bourgeoisie will tell us that these things are necessary to keep the economy from crashing and protecting our country from terrorism. I now see that the only way to get the change that we need to see is class struggle and a fight for a workers government.

P.

***WV* replies:**

We thank P. for writing to us. Regarding the 2005 strike and its aftermath, we refer readers to our article, "TWU Local 100 Tops Sign No-Strike Pledge" (*WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008).■

**Partisan Defense Committee**

## CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

# Salute Heroic Japanese Nuclear Workers

Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency

**Workers in control room at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, March 23.**

*The Partison Defense Committee sent the following statement of solidority to the Federotion of Electric Power Related Industry Workers Unions of Japan on March 19.*

The Partisan Defense Committee salutes the heroic members of your union who are risking their lives in an effort to control the dangerous situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant following the earthquake and tsunami. The PDC is a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/U.S., which, along with the Spartacist Group Japan, are sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The valor and dedication of the Fukushima Daiichi workers stand in sharp contrast to the parasitism and greed of the owners and managers of TEPCO [Tokyo Electric Power Company] and their unofficial spokesmen in the government. They have endangered the population with their obfuscation and mismanagement. For the capitalists in every country and every industry, the overriding concern is their profits and not the safety of the workers or the interests of society as a whole.

All of this underlines the urgent need for trade-union control over safety and all working conditions at every level. If the labor of those who toil is to serve the interests of society and not the bottom line of the bosses, it is necessary for the working class to take power and rule on the basis of a collectivized planned economy.

We intend to circulate this message to organizations within the workers movement internationally and encourage them to likewise extend their support.

* * *

The PDC urges trade unions and other organizations to send their own letters to the union in solidarity with the nuclear power workers at the Fukushima plant—known as the "Fukushima 50"—some of whom have already been hospitalized. Messages can be e-mailed to: icemjaf@blue.ocn.ne.jp. The PDC has contributed $500 to the union and urges others to make their own contributions. The information for wiring funds is as follows. Bank Name: Mizuho Bank, Ltd.; Swift Code: MHBKJPJT; Branch Name: Shiba Branch; Branch Address: 5-34-7, Shiba, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 108-0014, Japan; Account Name: Nihon Kagaku Energi-Kouzan Roudoukumiai Kyougikai; Account Number: 054-3316103. Please state "Earthquake" on the wire transfer form.■

# Stop Deportation of Chilean Leftist Victor Toro!

A March 2 ruling by Assistant Chief Immigration Judge Sarah Burr in New York has put the life of exiled Chilean leftist Victor Toro in danger. The ruling denied political asylum and ordered the deportation of the 68-year-old Toro, who suffered imprisonment and torture under the U.S.-backed military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. In 1976, Toro was expelled from Chile and declared "dead," leaving him stateless and unable to obtain identity papers. Evading Pinochet's murderous agents abroad, Toro arrived in the U.S. in 1984 and became a well-known community activist in the South Bronx, where he assisted immigrants and the poor as well as battered women and people with HIV/AIDS. In 2007, he was arrested on an Amtrak train during an anti-immigrant sweep. The labor movement, the left and immigrant rights groups must join in opposing his deportation and demanding that he be granted political asylum.

In 1974, the year following the coup led by Pinochet that overthrew the popular-front government of Salvador Allende, the military regime arrested Toro, who became a mine worker in the late 1950s and later a founder of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). The MIR was targeted by the military junta as part of a bloody wave of repression that included widespread "disappearances" and torture and the slaughter of over 30,000 union militants, leftists and others. His wife, Nieves Ayress, a U.S. citizen, is also a survivor of torture in Pinochet's dungeons.

In arguing for Toro's deportation and denial of his appeal for political asylum, Homeland Security lawyers repeated claims made in CIA documents at the height of the 1970s repression in Chile that the MIR was a "terrorist organization." This false and sinister argument, equating leftist political activity with terrorism, magnifies the danger to Toro should he be returned to Chile. Judge Burr ruled that Toro is not eligible for political asylum because he should have applied before 1997, while Pinochet was serving as the head of Chile's armed forces under the "democratic" government that succeeded his regime in 1990. As noted in legal papers filed by his lawyer, Carlos Moreno, Toro "has made sworn statements against members of the Chilean military who committed human rights violations," making him to this day "a target of members of the Chilean military who although not governing the country nevertheless retain a great deal of power."

Victor Toro's lawyer filed a notice of appeal on March 17. *Asylum now for Victor Toro! No deportation!*■

# Black Mother Jailed for Getting Kids into Decent School

## Ohio

In a stark illustration of black oppression in America today, Kelley Williams-Bolar, a single black mother from Akron, Ohio, was jailed in January for the "crime" of sending her two daughters to a better school. In 2006, Williams-Bolar claimed residency of her children with her father, with whom they lived part-time following the burglary of her public housing apartment and to whom she attempted to grant power of attorney over the children. By declaring her children resident a mere three miles away, she gained access for them to the suburban Copley-Fairlawn school district, which is 75 percent white and has received a state designation of "Excellent with Distinction." The schools that Williams-Bolar's daughters would otherwise have attended, which are over 90 percent black, were designated as "Academic Watch" and "Continuous Improvement"—one and two levels above absolute bottom.

As part of a multi-year effort to crack down on "theft of services," the Copley-Fairlawn district had Williams-Bolar and her children trailed by a private detective. Initially, they attempted to get her to pay back "tuition" (i.e., fees for out-of-district students), as they had with 47 other "offenders," largely black. In her case, that amounted to more than $30,000. When she refused, she was dragged into court and sentenced to an outrageous ten years in prison—later reduced to ten days, with two years' probation and 80 hours of community service. The felony conviction could prevent Williams-Bolar from attaining her teaching degree, which she was only a few credits away from completing at the time of her sentencing. *Rescind the conviction of Kelley Williams-Bolar!*

More than 50 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the American public education system is still separate and unequal. Despite the victories of the civil rights movement in confronting legal segregation, the *de facto* segregation of black people endures as a structural feature of the American capitalist system. While the Democrats are promoted by the trade-union bureaucrats and black liberal spokesmen as a "lesser evil," they serve the interests of America's rulers just as much as the Republicans. Obama's "school reform" policy—spearheaded by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, whose résumé includes closing some 60 Chicago schools—is nothing but a single massive assault on public schools and teachers unions (see "Obama's War on Public Education," *WV* No. 967, 22 October 2010). When asked about Williams-Bolar's case, Duncan decried a situation "where children have one option" and called for expanding charter schools, which attack teachers, attack unions, further privatize education and further increase segregation.

Akron Beacon Journal

**January 18: Kelley Williams-Bolar being led out of Summit County court after receiving jail sentence.**

Indeed, Akron demonstrates what "school choice" really means: those with the means have choice, and those without the means have the choice to take what they're given—or else. The degradation

*continued on page 4*

## Australia Floods

# Capitalist Greed and Neglect

*The following article is reprinted from* Australasian Spartacist *No. 212 (Autumn 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League.*

Australasian SPARTACIST

During January large areas of Queensland, almost a third of Victoria, as well as parts of northern New South Wales and South Australia were awash with devastating floods produced by one of the strongest La Niña events ever recorded. Hardest hit was Queensland where at least thirty-five died and thousands were left homeless. While large areas of Brisbane were inundated, those living in the Lockyer Valley in southeast Queensland experienced the terror of what has been described as an "inland tsunami" as an unstoppable torrent of water crashed through everything in its path.

While natural disasters inevitably inflict havoc, the extent of the death and devastation in Queensland was a product of capitalist greed and neglect. The Bureau of Meteorology gave repcated advance warnings to the Queensland government that the east coast would suffer torrential down pours this summer, yet nothing was done. Now controversy rages over the state Labor government's administration of Wivenhoe Dam near Brisbane, which was built in the aftermath of the 1974 Brisbane floods. Despite the repeated flood warnings, water levels at Wivenhoe were allowed to reach dangerous heights. On 11 January the situation had become so precarious the dam administrators were forced to release more than the volume of water in Sydney Harbour into the already swollen Brisbane River, thus contributing to the flooding of the city.

According to reports in Murdoch's *Australian* newspaper, in 2006 the state government skimped on a necessary safety upgrade of Wivenhoe Dam in order to save tens of millions of dollars. This penny-pinching in effect ***reduced*** the flood-mitigation capacity of the dam by up to 20 per cent. This is hardly surprising. In search of the quick buck, and refusing to build adequate infrastructure, one Queensland government after the next has had no policy for limiting development on flood prone locations or for constructing levees to protect towns most under threat. Alongside this, the Queensland government has embarked on massive union-busting privatisations of infrastructure, from rail to wharves, in order to help enrich their capitalist "mates."

Julia Gillard's federal Labor government aims to pay for flood reconstruction by slashing spending and imposing a new tax that will target large sections of the working class. Meanwhile the parasitic insurance companies have scrambled to deny payouts, absurdly claiming that what happened in Brisbane was not a "flood" but a "rising river." With the usual capitalist government double-speak about "transparency," the premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, announced a royal commission-style "inquiry" into the handling of the floods. Such state inquiries are not only designed to amnesty the capitalist rulers and their governments but in this case have also served to deflect the anger and despair of flood victims into safe channels. Throughout the crisis the bourgeois media bombarded the population with "national unity" rhetoric thick with eulogies to a mythical "Aussie spirit" while calling on everyone to "stick together."

Mooy/Daily Telegraph

**Woman in Lockyer Valley following devastating January Queensland floods.**

In conjunction with this nationalist outpouring, the government seized the opportunity to call in the army, placing Major-General Mick Slater, former head of Australian imperialism's 2006 neocolonial occupation of East Timor, in charge of the "flood recovery task force." The capitalist rulers use such natural calamities to accustom the population to the intervention of the military into civil society, while their media hacks work overtime to paint the repressive capitalist state as a supposed humanitarian force for good. Nothing could be further from the truth. Leninists understand that the bourgeois state—at its core the military, police, prisons and courts—is a violent repressive apparatus that exists to defend the property and profits of the filthy rich capitalists against the struggles of the working class and oppressed.

Following the floods the mendacious capitalist rulers and their media sensationalised the harrowing ordeals of some, while in general disappearing the desperate reality that most working people and the oppressed particularly confront in the wake of such disasters. Following the flooding of coal mines in Queensland, the bourgeoisie bellowed about the potential negative impact on the national economy and future coal contracts (read their profits) but there has been nary a word about the impact of the floods on mine workers. Meanwhile the Labor government backed those bosses who refused to pay workers stood down [laid off] as a result of the floods.

Highlighting the bourgeoisie's contempt and indifference toward the plight of Aboriginal people, there has been barely any mention of the conditions in impoverished Aboriginal communities, which have doubtless been left to fend for themselves amidst fetid mud-encrusted wreckage. Reflecting conscious capitalist neglect, the Palm Island Aboriginal community, the largest and one of the most poverty-stricken indigenous communities in Australia, was pointedly not evacuated prior to the devastating Cyclone Yasi that struck shortly after the floods. The chronic homelessness, mortality rates and unemployment experienced by Aboriginal people in this racist capitalist society will only be exacerbated as a result of these natural disasters.

The misery inflicted by the floods or other natural disasters is magnified tenfold by the decrepit, irrational, capitalist system which, in the search for the greatest profit margins, treats human life with criminal disregard. It is the proletariat, poor and oppressed who always suffer the most as a result of capitalist neglect and greed. It will take a socialist revolution and the establishment of a planned collectivised economy under workers rule for the natural resources and the technological and productive forces of society to be marshalled on behalf of human needs not profit.

Counterposed to this perspective is the puerile reformism of the fake-left opponents of revolutionary Marxism. In their 11 January statement calling for "Money for flood relief, not for war," Socialist Alliance (SA) demand the Gillard government "call *our* troops back from the war in Afghanistan to assist with tackling the flood crisis and its aftermath" (our emphasis). For their part, the misnamed Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), proving yet again that their split with SA's antecedent (the Democratic Socialist Perspective) had no programmatic basis, write, "A simple first step could be to redeploy the troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan to flood affected areas to do socially useful work." What will these toadies of the bourgeoisie come up with next? Help "the people" by building a bigger military!? As for Socialist Alternative (SAlt) they provide a slightly different but no less reformist schema, baldly headlining that the "Gov't Should Rethink Priorities to Deal with Flood Region." Typical of reformists the world over SAlt meekly advise the capitalist rulers to change their policies: "The Afghanistan war cost $1.2 billion last financial year—scrap it. Gross operating profits of business totalled $248 billion over the last year—tax it" (*Socialist Alternative*, 14 January).

In sharp contrast to the reformists' self-appointed role as advisers to the bourgeoisie, we revolutionary Marxists look to the working class as the agency for social change. The Queensland Council of Unions reported that there was an outpouring of "thousands of hours of volunteer labour and significant financial assistance" from unions in the immediate aftermath of the floods. This was a good thing. But while the union bureaucrats are happy to sing the praises of workers volunteering their labour and money they do nothing to organise a class-struggle fight for a massive rebuilding program of public works and infrastructure to create full employment, with union jobs at union wage scales and conditions.

That the union misleaders refuse to engage in such a struggle is rooted in their support to the capitalist profit system, expressed politically in their Laborite nationalism and reliance on the capitalist state, which they repeatedly campaign to be administered by a Labor government. To unleash the social power of the multiracial working class means a fight to break with the politics of Laborism. Concretely this will require a political struggle to replace the hidebound union bureaucrats with a leadership committed to mobilising proletarian power, independent of the capitalist state and in the interests of all the exploited and oppressed. Ultimately it will take the construction of a revolutionary workers party, on the model of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks who led the great 1917 Russian Revolution, to lead the working class in the overthrow of this anarchic, irrational, profit-driven system, which endangers the safety and welfare of the population. ■

## Black Mother...

*(continued from page 3)*

of public education has hit the working class and especially minorities particularly hard in cities like Akron, which have suffered a huge economic downturn with deindustrialization. In 1993, the Ohio legislature passed an "open enrollment" act allowing students in participating schools to transfer between adjacent districts. In short order, roughly 1,100 students, nearly all white, transferred from Akron to schools in neighboring suburbs.

Efforts by the school district to stem these out-transfers were overturned in 1996 by a federal district court in a case brought by an outfit called the Equal Open Enrollment Association. This set the stage for further rulings across the country severely restricting the ability for school districts to take measures against segregation—part of a long, deliberate process of overturning *Brown*. Even as white flight continues from Akron schools, suburban districts near poor and minority areas, such as Copley-Fairlawn, have been able to "choose" to opt out of open enrollment, keeping the children of poor minority parents like Kelley Williams-Bolar trapped in the holding pens that are ghetto schools. With "choice" like this, who needs compulsion? When someone such as Kelley Williams-Bolar crosses the line, the repressive force of the capitalist state stands ready to remind her and her children of their "place."

The case of Williams-Bolar speaks to the vast inequalities structurally embedded in the system of American capitalism. To achieve actual quality, integrated education for all requires a socialist revolution in which the multiracial working class replaces the rotting structure of capitalist property relations with a planned economy, where there are jobs and decent living conditions for all. Only a society organized on the basis of production for human need and not for the profit of an elite few can ensure that all are able to learn and develop to their full potential. The fight for such an egalitarian socialist society requires building a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the exploited and oppressed. ■

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## U.S. Reactionaries Stir Up Anti-Gay Terror

# Uganda: Gay Rights Activist Brutally Murdered

David Kato, a courageous fighter for gay rights, was bludgeoned to death with a hammer in his home in Kampala, Uganda, on January 26. He was 46 years old. A co-founder of the gay rights organization Sexual Minorities Uganda, Kato was repeatedly beaten, harassed and jailed by police. In October 2010, his picture appeared on the front page of a reactionary local newspaper, *Rolling Stone*, together with an article showing photos, listing names and revealing the whereabouts of hundreds of "known" homosexuals and gay rights activists under the banner "Hang Them!" In a landmark case, Kato sued the paper and won the equivalent of US$640 in damages. Just weeks later, he was murdered.

In Uganda homosexuality—defined as "carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature"—is a crime punishable by up to 14 years in prison. President Yoweri Museveni, in power for 25 years, has called for gays to be tracked down and jailed. He continues to fuel homophobic violence by publicly claiming that gays are recruiting Ugandan schoolchildren. Now, a proposed "Anti-Homosexuality Bill," written by parliament member David Bahati, would give the state sanction to kill gays by imposing a death sentence for those convicted of "aggravated homosexuality," including those who engage in homosexual sex with disabled persons or with persons under the age of 18 and also including those labeled "serial offenders." The law would also bring a three-year jail sentence for anyone who fails to report homosexuals to the police within 24 hours.

AP

**Ugandan *Rolling Stone* in October 2010 called for all gays to be hanged and showed David Kato's picture on the cover.**

Bahati boasts of his ties with powerful American evangelicals and has been to the U.S. to study the "Christian leadership principles" of an outfit known as "the Family." A clandestine group of prominent politicians, CEOs and others, "the Family" has long exerted considerable political influence both in Washington, D.C., and abroad. It organizes the annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, which has been attended by every U.S. president since Eisenhower.

In a meeting with Jeff Sharlet, author of *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*, Bahati openly stated that his aim is to "kill every last gay person." His Anti-Homosexuality Bill was written one month after a March 2009 conference in Kampala featuring a group of well-known American Christian fundamentalists. As described in a *New York Times* (4 January 2010) article, "Americans' Role Seen in Uganda Anti-Gay Push":

> "For three days, according to participants and audio recordings, thousands of Ugandans, including police officers, teachers and national politicians, listened raptly to the Americans, who were presented as experts on homosexuality. The visitors discussed how to make gay people straight, how gay men often sodomized teenage boys and how 'the gay movement is an evil institution' whose goal is 'to defeat the marriage-based society and replace it with a culture of sexual promiscuity'."

### Obama's Crocodile Tears for Kato

Shortly after Kato's murder, President Barack Obama, who personally opposes gay marriage, released a statement laden with hypocrisy. Saying he was "deeply saddened to learn of the murder of David Kato," Obama continued: "My Administration will continue to strongly support human rights and assistance work on behalf of LGBT persons abroad. We do this because we recognize the threat faced by leaders like David Kato, and we share their commitment to advancing freedom, fairness, and equality for all."

One need look no further than the carnage in occupied Afghanistan and Iraq, or the cruise missiles raining down on Libya, for a measure of such "commitment to advancing freedom" by Obama, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism. In the service of Washington's global "war on terror," Uganda's police Rapid Response Unit engages in "torture, illegal detention and extrajudicial killings of its citizens," according to a Human Rights Watch study reported in the *New York Times* (23 March). As for Obama's sermonizing about human rights, it is the imperialists' subjugation of neocolonial countries that perpetrates economic deprivation and other misery. Such conditions feed the religious reaction and social backwardness that brutally oppress women—seen in the prevalence in Uganda of female genital mutilation, traditional polygamy and the bride price—as well as gays.

AP

**David Kato**

There is much being written about the links between evangelical Christians in the U.S. and the "kill gays" law in Uganda. In fact, Christian missionaries served in the second half of the 19th century as the advance guard for British imperialism's conquest of the territory. The rampant homophobia in Uganda today is in good measure a remnant of British colonialism, whose laws punished locals for participating in "unnatural sex"—the same proscription under which Oscar Wilde was sent to prison in Britain. To this day, "sodomy" laws are still on the books in more than 35 former British colonies around the world.

Moreover, the industrially advanced Christian West is not exactly a safe haven for gays and lesbians. The U.S., one of the most politically backward "advanced" capitalist countries on earth, is saddled with a huge burden of puritanism and religious fundamentalism. Bible-thumping bigots, "family values" crusaders and other reactionaries serve to ensure that homosexuals continue to endure violence, persecution and abrogation of their rights. This can literally be a death sentence: In 1998, Wyoming university student Matthew Shepard was beaten and left hanging on a barbed-wire fence to die; in 2002, Gwen Araujo, a transgender California youth was savagely beaten and then strangled to death by a rope.

The oppression of gays is directly related to the subordination of women and youth in the social unit of the family. The main institution for the oppression of women in class society, the family instills obedience to authority and bourgeois morality, resulting in widespread bigotry that is further propped up by the considerable power of organized religion. In capitalist society, anything or anyone who deviates from male/female gender roles in the family is seen as a threat to the social order. The International Communist League fights for full democratic rights for gays. This is part of our commitment to the revolutionary struggle to eradicate all oppression based on sex, race, ethnicity and class through the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of an egalitarian socialist society.

White House photo

**Barack Obama addressing February 2009 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., sponsored by reactionary group "the Family." Ugandan legislator linked to "the Family" is sponsoring "kill gays" law.**

### Anti-Gay Bigotry in Neo-Apartheid South Africa

In an interview, David Kato, who taught in South Africa for several years, spoke to the inspiration he drew from the fight to bring down the hated white-supremacist apartheid regime, under which homosexuality was banned: "In South Africa I fought for their liberation in Johannesburg, so when I came home... I had the same momentum—I tried to liberate my own community." On paper, the constitution in post-apartheid South Africa, one of only ten countries in the world that legally recognize gay marriage, opposes discrimination based on sexual orientation. But a look at the reality on the ground shows a far different picture, with violence against homosexuals both frequent and widespread. Lesbians are often targeted for what is called "corrective rape." One high-profile case involved the brutal April 2008 killing of Eudy Simelane, a star of the South African women's soccer team. An open lesbian, Simelane died after being gang-raped and stabbed 25 times.

South African president Jacob Zuma, leader of the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress, has himself promoted anti-gay violence. In a 2006 speech, he proclaimed that "when I was growing up an *ungqingili* (a gay person) would not have stood in front of me. I would knock him out." Zuma has also decried same-sex marriage as "a disgrace to the nation and to God." Most recently, he appointed a well-known homophobe who calls for the criminalization of gay marriage as South Africa's ambassador to Uganda! This is rightly seen as a statement of open support for Uganda's anti-homosexual law.

We should honor David Kato's bravery in fighting the deadly repression faced by himself and other gays in Uganda. But the only road forward in addressing the brutal conditions of life throughout Africa and liberating these countries from the grip of imperialism is the overthrow of capitalist rule. The revolutionary mobilization of the powerful, mainly black proletariat of South Africa is crucial to this perspective. Only world proletarian socialist revolution can rid the planet of the imperialist order and its neocolonial front men. This will lay the material foundations for a new world in which the oppressive institution of the family will be replaced by socialization of childcare and household work. Only then can all social relations be truly hased on the free choice of individuals. The International Communist League is committed to championing these liberating goals of communism and the necessarily global struggle for a classless, egalitarian socialist society.■

# Libya...

*(continued from page 1)*

neocolonial lackeys. While those protesting the oppressive U.S.-backed regimes in Bahrain and Yemen are gunned down and dispossessed Palestinians face a renewed wave of Zionist state terror, Obama would have us believe that tears welled up in his eyes as he contemplated the fate of the Libyan rebels. The White House hypocritically castigates Qaddafi for deploying the military against civilians challenging his rule. Here at home, the mission of the Pentagon's Northern Command includes coordinating operations on U.S. territory against "threats on the homeland," meaning everything from terrorist attacks to popular insurrection.

Richard Falk, a UN spokesman, pointed out that the Libyan uprising was "more in the nature of a traditional insurrection against the established order than a popular revolution inspired by democratic values" (*Al Jazeera*, 23 March). He added that threats of intervention only arose when "the domestic tide turned in favour of Tripoli, which means that intervention was called upon to overcome the apparent growing likelihood that Gaddafi would reestablish order in his favour."

As Marxists, we have always politically opposed Qaddafi's capitalist regime, a dictatorship that has brutally suppressed anyone suspected of opposing his rule. At the same time, we have consistently defended Libya against imperialist attacks, as in the 1986 U.S. bombing under Ronald Reagan. At that time, Qaddafi's daughter was killed in an attack on the family compound that was clearly meant to assassinate him. For the U.S. Cold Warriors, chief among Qaddafi's "crimes" at the time was that he was a military client of the Soviet Union. With their current attack on Libya, the imperialists are jettisoning the rapprochement they reached with Qaddafi over the last decade, when his regime closely collaborated with Washington in the "global war on terror" and helped police the Mediterranean to keep African migrants out of Europe.

For its part, the Libyan opposition is angling to gain control of the country's substantial oil and natural gas wealth. Rebel forces have been rounding up, torturing and killing anyone suspected of being a Qaddafi supporter, especially black Africans alleged to be his mercenaries. Peter Bouckaert of Human Rights Watch reports that fleeing Africans have been pushed off ships sent by European governments to evacuate their nationals ("The Battle for Libya," *New York Review of Books*, 7 April). In this, the opposition takes its cue, and then some, from the oppression of African migrants under Qaddafi. As for the "humanitarian" imperialists, European governments are ramping up efforts to prevent refugees from making it to their countries.

Even before the bombing began, we noted in "Imperialists Hands Off Libya!" (*WV* No. 976, 18 March) that the proletariat in Libya had been devastated as a result of the civil war, with migrant workers fleeing the violence and racist attacks. The article continued:

> "The future of the Libyan masses will be decided by working-class struggle that extends beyond the national terrain to include the proletariats of Algeria, Tunisia and, especially, Egypt. That requires the forging of revolutionary working-class parties as part of a genuine Trotskyist Fourth International, which would link the fight for socialist federations of North Africa and of the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers."

## U.S. Imperialism "Protecting Civilians"

**Top row, left to right: U.S. soldier posing with body of Afghan civilian murdered by U.S. "kill team"; funeral for Pakistani victims of U.S. missile attack in North Waziristan region near Afghan border. Bottom row, left to right: UN-imposed sanctions killed some 1.5 million Iraqis due to starvation, lack of medicine; massacre of hundreds of civilians in My Lai, indelible symbol of U.S. war against Vietnamese Revolution.**

### Washington's "Human Rights" Canard

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has likened what Qaddafi is facing to what befell former Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, who died in 2006 while on trial in the international war crimes court. Hillary Clinton harks back to the 1995 NATO bombing of Serbs in Bosnia in the name of preventing a "genocidal" slaughter of Bosnian Muslims. In 1999, the U.S.-led bombing of Serbia, carried out under the pretense of protecting Albanian Kosovars, terrorized and slaughtered Serbians, destroying a hospital, power grids and other infrastructure. These wars, carried out under Bill Clinton's presidency, exemplified the imperialists' ruse of covering their mass terror with a veneer of "human rights."

According to press reports, National Security Council aide Samantha Power and UN ambassador Susan Rice were instrumental in convincing Obama to launch air attacks on Libya. Power's 2002 book *A Problem from Hell* chastises U.S. policy makers who chose not to intervene in Rwanda in the 1990s and elsewhere. Rice is a protégé of Madeleine Albright, who was UN ambassador and then secretary of state under Bill Clinton, whose administration enforced UN starvation sanctions against Iraq that were first imposed in 1990 under George Bush Sr. When asked in 1996 about the half million Iraqi children killed by that time as a result of the sanctions, which were accompanied by repeated bomb attacks, Albright responded, "We think the price is worth it." By 2003, the sanctions had cost the lives of one and a half million people and gravely undermined Iraq's ability to defend itself against the 2003 U.S. war and occupation.

With U.S. forces already stretched thin by their murderous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, Republicans in Washington and other bourgeois critics of the Obama administration are voicing concern over getting involved in another endless quagmire. Poking holes into the fabric of "multilateralism" that covers the war against Libya, right-wing columnist David Brooks opined in the *New York Times* (21 March): "It is hard to get leaders from different nations with different values to agree on a common course of action." He went on: "In the Libyan campaign, Qaddafi's defenders will be fighting for land, home, God and country. The multinational force will be organized by an acronym and motivated by a calibrated calculus to achieve a humanitarian end." The simple fact is that what Obama and his cohorts are up to is *mass terror* under the UN banner. Those like Brooks prefer that U.S. imperialism carry out its brigandage without restraints imposed by "coalition partners."

The value that the imperialists place on Libya has mainly to do with its enormous reserves of high-grade oil and natural gas. For example, Italy, Libya's former colonial slave master, depends on Libyan oil for a quarter of its petroleum needs. Calculating its own interests, German imperialism under Christian Democratic chancellor Angela Merkel abstained on the UN Security Council's war resolution, prompting Joschka Fischer, leader of the bourgeois Green Party, to declare: "Germany has lost its credibility in the United Nations and the Middle East." Nevertheless, Germany, along with other European Union members, has called for an embargo on all oil from Libya. For Libya, a country that imports 75 percent of its food and pays for it with oil revenues, this could mean mass starvation. Meanwhile, the U.S. has made very clear that there will be no such sanctions against the opposition, which, soon after taking oil


**Just Out!**

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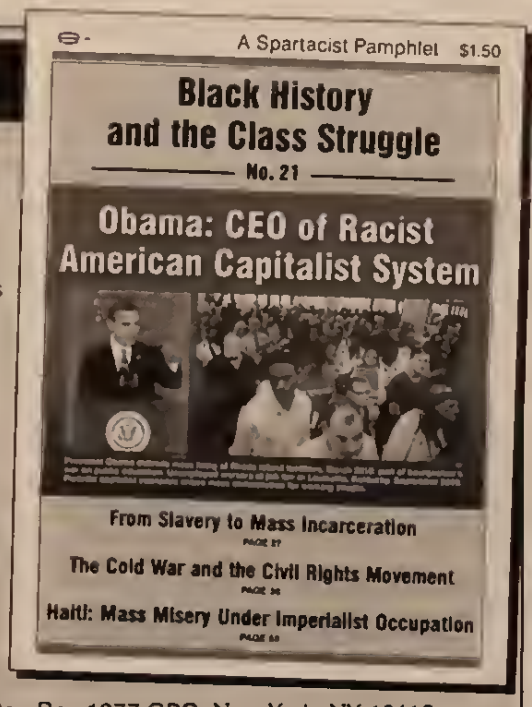


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### Imperialism's Social-Democratic Drummer Boys

Defense of Libya against imperialist bombardment should be elementary, not only for proletarian opponents of capitalist rule but for anyone repulsed by capitalist powers imposing their diktat on Third World countries through overwhelming military might. Yet the bulk of the "socialist" left internationally has worked to line up workers and youth behind the imperialist murderers by championing the opposition that is acting as their ground troops. They have done this in the name of the so-called "Libyan revolution." But what kind of "revolutionary" appeals to the imperialists to impose a "no-fly zone," launch air strikes or otherwise intervene militarily in their country, as opposition leaders did?

The French New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) early on pledged its "total support to the insurgents." Over Libya, this social-democratic group—established two years ago by the French section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec)—achieved convergence with French president Sarkozy, who welcomed key anti-Qaddafi leaders in the Elysée Palace on March 10 and declared the opposition National Council to be Libya's legitimate government. The day after the UN Security Council voted to authorize the "use of force in Libya," the NPA chimed in with a March 18 statement declaring that "the Libyan people... should be given the means to defend themselves and the weapons they need to throw out the dictator." The NPA endorsed the call for a rally held the next day in support of the imperialists' stooges in Libya, which took place as the bombing started.

While the NPA statement muttered that "military intervention is not the solution," Gilbert Achcar, a London-based leftist who associates himself with the USec and the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), had no such reservations. Echoing the imperialists' lying pretext of "protecting civilians" from the vengeance of Qaddafi's forces, Achcar declared in a 19 March *ZNet* article that "no one can reasonably oppose" the UN resolution authorizing the air attacks.

In Britain, Conservative prime minister David Cameron, an early proponent of attacking Libya, was backed by Labour Party leader Ed Miliband. And behind Labour stand Britain's house-trained reformists, the SWP, who counseled: "Instead of bombing Libya, Western governments could hand all the assets they have seized from Gaddafi's regime to the revolutionary forces" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 22 March). In other words, the imperialist gangsters who have ripped off the assets of a sovereign country should hand them over to their flunkeys.

Reuters

Spartacist Canada

**French president Sarkozy meeting with Libyan opposition emissaries at Elysée Palace in Paris on March 10, more than a week before French planes began imperialist bombardment of Libya. Right: French flag at March 19 Toronto demonstration built by International Socialists.**

The SWP's estranged American cousins in the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which initially embraced the CIA-funded National Salvation Front with open arms, now claims to have discovered that some pretty reactionary forces are in the leadership of the anti-Qaddafi opposition. The ISO spares a few words, on paper, to express opposition to the bombing. But that does not prevent it from continuing to embrace the opposition forces, no matter what atrocities the imperialists carry out on their behalf. At a March 20 forum in New York City, ISO honcho Ahmed Shawki declared: "Today, the West is bombing Libya as its way of getting a foothold back into the Middle East. But we should have no truck whatsoever to do with the Libyan regime or a defense of it, and join all of those involved in the Middle East people getting rid of its dictators."

In Canada, where Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper has contributed a half dozen fighter-bombers to the imperialist assault force, the International Socialists (I.S.), affiliated to the British SWP, also hailed Qaddafi's imperialist-backed opponents while claiming to oppose the bombing. The utter hypocrisy of this stance was exposed at a March 19 demonstration in Toronto called by the I.S.'s creation, the Toronto Arab Solidarity Campaign, where the I.S. stood shoulder to shoulder with people carrying huge French and Canadian flags and chanting "Kill Qaddafi!" A Trotskyist League of Canada comrade reported: "Once we saw the vile character of the demo, we increased the size of our team: not to be part of it, but to make our opposition to this pro-imperialist carnival clearer and give it more impact. We stood to the side, with placards and chants, declaring 'Imperialists Hands Off Libya'."

The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 emboldened the imperialists, centrally the U.S., to carry out a series of bombings, wars and occupations against weaker countries. Capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union removed what had been the main impediment to imperialist depredations, today exemplified by the slaughter of Afghans and Iraqis by U.S.-led occupation forces.

The social-democratic "left" helped pave the way for these atrocities by hailing the counterrevolutionary forces, from Polish Solidarność to Boris Yeltsin's Russian "democrats." Having discarded even the pretense of advocating proletarian socialism, the reformists increasingly and all the more openly march under the banner of bourgeois "democracy." The USec, among others, promoted imperialist military intervention against the Serbs in 1995 under the guise of providing humanitarian aid for workers in Bosnia. Four years later, the same characters were calling for a European imperialist expeditionary force in Kosovo.

It is noteworthy that a March 22 "Joint Statement" by various Communist Parties around the world—including the Greek KKE, the Portuguese CP and the Indian CPI and CPI(M)—condemns the imperialist intervention against Libya and does not support the pro-imperialist opposition (which it simply avoids mentioning). However, the statement fails to call for military defense of neocolonial Libya, pushing instead a pacifistic appeal for "the peoples" to demand an end to the imperialist intervention.

The U.S. Workers World Party (WWP) and Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) voice similar opposition to the attack on Libya, mainly driven by their longstanding political support for bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces in Third World countries that make a pretense of being "anti-imperialist." The ANSWER coalition, founded by the WWP and now controlled by the PSL, recently staged a series of demonstrations calling to "stop the bombing of Libya" and raising the reformist-pacifist demand that the imperialist rulers spend money on jobs and education, not war. This is the timeworn formula the WWP, PSL and others have used to build class-collaborationist "anti-war movements" that unite "the people" behind a supposedly more benign wing of the blood-soaked, profit-bloated capitalist ruling class.

Imperialist wars, occupations and terror-bombing campaigns are inherent to the system of capitalism in its decay. The quest for cheap labor, raw materials and exclusive markets that compels the imperialist rulers to wage military adventures abroad is accompanied by incessant attacks on the wages and conditions of workers on the home front. The current worldwide capitalist economic crisis has brought massive unemployment accompanied by wage-slashing, elimination of social services and a full-bore assault on trade unions. The only way out is through a fight for proletarian revolutions against the decaying capitalist order. This requires building revolutionary workers parties like Lenin's Bolsheviks—in the U.S., Europe, North Africa and around the world. ■

# ICL Statement...

*(continued from page 1)*

***against imperialist attack! U.S. Fifth Fleet and all imperialist military bases and troops out of North Africa and the Near East!***

Recall that the slaughter of well over a million people in Iraq began with the imposition of a UN-sponsored starvation embargo and a "no fly zone" in the 1990s. The latest action by the Security Council, including the neo-apartheid South African regime led by the African National Congress, underscores yet again the character of the United Nations as a den of imperialist thieves and their lackeys and semicolonial victims. The abstention by the representative of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, gave tacit approval to imperialist depredation, emboldening the very forces which seek to overturn the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

The crocodile tears shed by the imperialist rulers and their media mouthpieces over the Libyans killed by the Qaddafi regime during the recent wave of protests stands in sharp contrast to their muted response to the continuing massacre of protesters in Yemen—whose dictatorship is a key component of Washington's "war on terror"—and their ongoing support to the Bahraini kingdom, which hosts the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet. To aid in crushing mass protests, Bahrain last week invited in troops from the medievalist and theocratic Saudi monarchy, a key bulwark of U.S. imperialist interests in the region. In the eyes of the imperialist rulers, Bahrain's Shi'ite majority and the Yemeni masses are less than human, with no rights they are bound to respect.

Numerous social-democratic leftists, typified by the United Secretariat (USec) and the British Cliffite Socialist Workers Party, have done their part to prepare the ground for imperialist massacres in Libya by cheering on the so-called "Libyan Revolution." Having urged support for the cabal of pro-imperialist "democrats," CIA stooges, monarchists and Islamists that comprise the Benghazi-based opposition, these reformists now feign to balk at imperialist military intervention in support of the opposition. The New Anti-Capitalist Party, constituted in 2009 by the USec's French section, signed a call for a demonstration yesterday demanding that the Benghazi outfit be recognized as "the only legitimate representative of the Libyan people"—which French ruler Sarkozy had already done! At the same time, those left groups that have promoted illusions in Qaddafi's "anti-imperialist" pretensions—such as the Workers World Party in the U.S.—seek everywhere and at all times to chain the working class to a mythical "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie.

We pledge today, as we did at the time of the U.S. Reagan administration's bombing of Libya in 1986, to "undertake every effort to propagandize the need for the world working class to take the side of Libya" against its imperialist enemies ("Under Reagan's Guns in Libya," *WV* No. 401, 11 April 1986). In the pursuit of profit and domination, the same capitalist ruling classes that brutally exploit the working class "at home," only to throw workers on the scrap heap during periods of economic crisis, as today, carry out murderous imperialist attacks abroad. The struggle against imperialist war cannot be conducted separately and apart from the class struggle. Only socialist revolution can overthrow the system of capitalist imperialism which breeds war. Our path is that of the October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which was a beacon of revolutionary internationalism for the proletariat everywhere. We struggle to reforge the Fourth International as an instrument that can lead the working masses, from the Near East to the imperialist centers, forward to new October Revolutions and a world socialist society. ■


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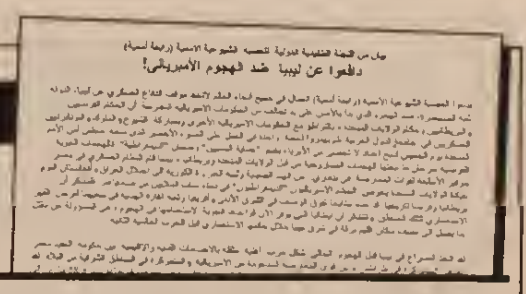
**Statement of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)**



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# For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

# Women and the East German Deformed Workers State

*We print below the conclusion of this article, which was translated from* Spartakist *No. 185 (October 2010), published by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany. Part One appeared in* WV *No. 976 (18 March).*

*PART TWO*

The Soviet Military Administration in Germany existed until November 1949, a month after the DDR [East German deformed workers state] was founded. Already in August 1946, the goal of drawing women into production—the so-called "Order 253"—had been promulgated, banning wage discrimination based on sex or age. A comparison: in West Germany such a law only came into existence ten years later. And of course under capitalism such a law—no wage discrimination—exists only on paper. Wage differentials are part and parcel of capitalism, a means of dividing the working class, particularly male and female workers. This is a fundamental component of the economic system.

Just a few days ago, there was a report in *Der Spiegel* with 2008 statistics showing wage differentials of over 23 percent between men and women. And simultaneously there has been a great increase in part-time work for women, who of course cannot survive on their wages but can't work full-time, since they can't get their children taken care of, etc. This law "against wage discrimination" has been in force in West Germany since 1956, but that signifies absolutely nothing.

Certainly, wage differences between men and women did exist in the DDR as well, but first of all they were not as shameless, since the wage range was not as wide and even the lowest wage groups had a secure living standard. It stemmed from bureaucratic misrule and was not inherent to the system. A government of workers soviets would have immediately annulled any wage differences, even if this would have meant opposing more backward elements in the working class.

Taking a look at the Democratic Women's Federation of Germany (DFD) is instructive here. It was founded in the DDR in 1947, having originally emerged out of the anti-fascist women's committees, i.e., out of committees that clearly in their own view—and by their very name—embraced a broader horizon. But the East German Stalinist party, the Socialist Unity Party (SED), increasingly tasked the DFD with dealing with "women's matters."

Yevgeny Khaldei

**Soviet soldiers trample Nazi flag on outskirts of Vienna in 1945.**

The DFD was affiliated with the so-called "National Front," an attempt by the DDR bureaucracy to mimic West Germany's "democratic" multiplicity of parties. This DDR formation contained all possible parties, from the Peasant Party to the Christian Democrats, but with the Stalinist bureaucracy setting the tone via the SED. In contrast to the situation under capitalism, this simply parodied a capitalist popular front, which always consists of a class alliance of bourgeois parties and workers parties. In the DDR, however, the bourgeoisie as a class had been overthrown and the National Front had only the appearance of a popular front.

Popular-frontist politics are a deception of the working class, politically disarming the workers by creating the illusion that they have no independent class interests and talking only about an undifferentiated "people." Internationally this meant that the Stalinist bureaucracies cozied up to bourgeois forces. For workers following Stalinist leadership, all too often this meant deadly defeats—as in the Chinese Revolution in 1927 and the Spanish Revolution in the 1930s, to cite only a couple of examples. For Marxists, the DDR was a dictatorship of the proletariat—albeit bureaucratically deformed—that rested on socialized relations of production, since the bourgeoisie had been expropriated. Within this framework, the National Front was *one* part of the programmatic propaganda of the DDR bureaucracy, which did not want its working class to come up with the idea that it had its own class interests, namely running the workers state itself via workers councils.

Nonetheless, the following is interesting as a fact: In the DDR, the DFD was a mass organization. These anti-fascist committees and DFD groups had originally existed in all of Germany. In the West, an association arose out of individual state associations in 1952; it was unceremoniously banned by the German bourgeoisie in 1957.

A couple more facts comparing the situation of women in these two countries, East and West Germany. In 1965, a compendium of family law appeared in the DDR stating: "Both spouses must do their part in the education and care of their children and running the household. The relations of the spouses to each other should take such a form that the woman can reconcile her professional activity and her activity in society with motherhood." While this meant exalting the "holy family," it still emphasized the equal status of women. In a 1966 report, the government of West Germany set forth that: "A care-giver and comforter is what women should be; an image of modest harmony, a factor for order in the uniquely dependable private sphere; women should enter into gainful employment and social engagement only when the demands placed on them by the family permit them to do so." In accord with this is the fact that *up till 1977* a West German law stated that a wife could not get a job without her husband's consent.

It was, of course, the socialized relations of production in the DDR that were responsible for these differences. Furthermore, an important aspect was that inheritance played no role in the DDR, since private ownership of the means of production no longer existed. After all, Engels had explained that what had originally been central to the entire institution and ideology of the family was that the husband wanted to know unambiguously: Are these my children or has my wife been playing the field? I want to bequeath solely to my children. That is the root of it.

All this simply played no role anymore in the DDR: There was nothing to bequeath, and thereby this function of the family under capitalism essentially dissolved. But the Stalinist leadership, these backward types, nonetheless kept trying to maintain the ideology of the family, attempting again and again to glue its ideological fragments together. One further aspect of the family is the regimentation of children, and this eroded as well in the DDR due to the socialized relations of production. In the DDR, since 1950 the age of majority had been set at 18; in West Germany this has been the case only since 1975!

Women's Day was always celebrated with flowers, accompanied with calls for the husband to make his wife a super-duper breakfast on this day and generally to be very supportive, etc. Such calls only made more obvious what was generally the rule: that women had to work a second shift to keep the household going and look after the children. The DDR leadership was truly seeking to drain International Women's Day of any trace of its being a day of struggle for the entire working class.

**Below: DDR leader Hans Modrow (left) with West German chancellor Helmut Kohl in Dresden, December 1989. Right: Workers at East Berlin shoe factory in May 1990 protest against threat of unemployment brought by capitalist reunification.**

DPA

Stern

When protests from proletarian women over their overly heavy burden of work and the "second shift" got too loud, there were divergent reactions. On the one hand, the bureaucracy sought to make more consumer goods available to lighten the burden of housework, particularly from the early 1970s on. For example, production of family washing machines was promoted. Perhaps it would have been more rational to massively increase the number of public laundromats and equip them better. There were also widespread campaigns for the husband to do more around the house. In fact, for the husband to help in the household was far more widespread in the DDR than in the West. Since 1952, a "Household Day" had existed in the DDR—one free day per month for household chores, but typically granted only to women. Only from 1977 on was it partially accorded to men as well.

## "Socialism in (Half of) One Country"

Housing was a scarce commodity in the DDR. The essential reason was that the resources to build adequate housing simply didn't exist in this half a country, under siege by vengeance-seeking German imperialism, which was continually brooding over how to regain this territory in which it no longer had the say. It is also important to recall that after 1945 West Germany had been beefed up by U.S. imperialism. Moreover, heavy industry plus the entire Ruhr region—i.e., the center of industry—were in the West. That is an important factor.

But the Stalinist bureaucracy in the DDR was unwilling to utter this home truth, instead making a virtue of necessity. "Socialism in one country" meant that the bureaucracy wanted to produce as "autarkically" as possible. Thus 70 percent of the products available on the world market were produced in the DDR, often of poor quality and at inflated cost, while the imperialists could base themselves on a division of labor in the world market, which they dominated. Married couples had first dibs on apartments, again putting pressure on people to get married. The bureaucracy did not proceed linearly here and kept changing its procedures; officially, single mothers and unmarried couples could also lay claim to an apartment. But the feeling among young people was generally that they had greater chances if they got married, strengthening the functions of the family within society.

An important and particularly unattractive aspect of the Stalinist bureaucracies' program of "socialism in one country"—in their own individual countries and apart from all others—is that it meant nationalism. While the DDR bureaucracy campaigned strongly for marriage and having children, this generally did not apply to contract workers from Mozambique, Cuba or Vietnam: these had no citizenship rights and were often segregated in specific residential areas. If a Vietnamese woman became pregnant, she usually had to get an abortion or return home, leave the country. This was a genuine, major, true piece of piggishness on the part of the bureaucracy. For us communists, it goes without saying, the central slogan is always "full citizenship rights for all immigrants," as was true for the early Soviet Union: anyone who lived and worked there had citizenship rights.

## Down With Paragraph 218!

The notorious [anti-abortion] Paragraph 218 constitutes an extremely important aspect of the woman and family question. This paragraph has existed since the time of Bismarck, since 1871. In the Weimar Republic, the Communist Party [KPD] was well known for its fight against Paragraph 218. There are some expressive posters, for example by Käthe Kollwitz, who for a couple of years was a member of the International Workers' Aid, the defense organization linked to the KPD. In the Weimar Republic, the KPD repeatedly introduced motions in the Reichstag [parliament] demanding: Down with this paragraph! All were quashed.

The first alteration after 1871 occurred in 1926, through a Social Democratic Party (SPD) motion that did pass. Abortion continued to be punishable under law, both for the woman and for the person performing it, but now it was "only" punished by a jail term and not by sending the perpetrators to a high-security prison. The fact that under the Nazis the death penalty was imposed for abortion—unless it served to prevent the "reproduction of inferior racial groups"—demonstrates the power exercised by the bourgeoisie via Paragraph 218 and just how deeply it cut into people's lives.

In 1945, the Nazi regime was smashed by the Red Army, through incredible sacrifice by the Soviet soldiers and people. After 1945, in both the East and the West, the Nazi law—i.e., the death penalty—was rescinded, but otherwise the old paragraph in the penal code was left standing. In the East, that is, in what became the DDR, this occurred with a direct reference to the legal code in the Soviet Union, where abortion had been forbidden by the 1936 Soviet constitution. In the areas under the Soviet Military Administration, the 1926 version of the paragraph was in force. Additionally, in some East German states, there was an "indication system," requiring that certain social or medical conditions be met, e.g., citing rape. There were a couple of minor different possibilities for how a woman might get an abortion, but they still fell under criminal law.

Bundesarchiv

**On eve of 17 June 1953 uprising, East Berlin construction workers demonstrate against government demand for more work at same pay.**

At this time, West Germany often had even stricter penalties for abortion. But before the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, women from the DDR went to West Berlin for abortions! The West Berlin Senate, usually in the hands of the SPD, obviously kept its eyes closed in the hope of damaging the DDR. This is such an utterly damning judgment on the Stalinists, for women to have to go to the capitalist part of Berlin for an abortion! And later women from the DDR went to Poland and Hungary for abortions: In Poland, a first-trimester law existed, while today, following capitalist counterrevolution, Poland has one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe, with ongoing attempts to han abortion entirely. This is a result of counterrevolution. But before first-trimester abortions were permitted in the DDR, women really did go to Poland and Hungary, where abortions were more readily available, as well as better and safer.

The question of the pill is also important and interesting. In the West, Schering introduced the pill to the German market in June 1961. In the DDR, there was a lengthy research period, with the pill appearing only in 1965. But it was then distributed free of charge, which made a huge difference. In West Germany in 1965, years after the pill had already been on the market, doctors were still denouncing this "state-promoted lack of restraint." In the DDR, Professor Mehlan was one of the pioneers of birth control. In 1965, the West German magazine *Stern* asked him the provocative question: Now tell us honestly—is it true that where you come from, abortion really is not murder? This is the way West Germany was in the 1960s, and even today this is far from being the unfortunate distant past. The Catholic church and other bigots continue to call abortion "murder." In the U.S., doctors who carry out abortions have been murdered. This rests on the notion purveyed by all churches that the will of God has already endowed the fertilized egg with the "soul" of the future human being.

In general, the Stalinist leadership in the DDR wobbled on the question of abortion and the pill. On the one hand, it cited the KPD in the Weimar Republic, which had fought Paragraph 218. On the other, it pushed the institution of the family; it needed population growth and additional labor and had to attract women into production, which in turn generated problems if women had no access to rational family planning. With their conservative program, the Stalinists were reacting on the one hand to pressure from the proletariat, including proletarian women, on the other to imperialism—they were, so to speak, attempting a wall-balancing act before the Berlin Wall even existed. Here again it is important to state that we Trotskyists defended the Wall, a bureaucratic measure (after all, that's how the bureaucracy works!) but also, however, a defensive measure to stop the DDR from being bled white of acutely needed skilled workers. Thus we defended the Wall against imperialism.

The DDR bureaucracy's program of "peaceful coexistence" entails the rejection of workers revolution and the illusory search for "progressive" bourgeois forces in the imperialist countries. The Stalinists always thought and hoped that the SPD—the SPD in West Germany of all things!—might perhaps be an expression of such "progressive forces." The Stalinists tended to fix their gaze on the SPD in the West the way a rabbit looks at a snake.

When first-trimester abortion was finally introduced in the DDR in 1972, it was also an attempt to trump the imperialist West and the SPD in the minds of women. For in the West in the summer of 1971, a well-known campaign had commenced with major involvement of SPD supporters: "We've had an abortion." Women accused themselves of this "criminal act." In all probability hastened by this, termination of a pregnancy in the first three months was finally allowed in the DDR. Incidentally, first-trimester abortions were introduced in West Germany in June 1974, only to be nullified the very same month by the Federal Constitutional Court on the grounds that abortion was in principle violating the constitution. Since May 1976, an "indication system" with all its contempt for humanity and with compulsory consultation, often carried out by church officials, has been the rule in West Germany. *We communists fight for the unlimited right of women to free abortion on demand, with the best possible medical care!*

As recently as 1988-89, a witchhunting trial took place in Memmingen, West Germany, where Dr. Theissen was hauled into court for having performed abortions—safe abortions, fine medical work. He felt that women had the right to decide for themselves. He was hauled into court and put in prison, and we intervened in his defense.

We also intervened for our position for the unconditional right to abortion in major demonstrations that took place in the former DDR following counterrevolution. These demonstrations were protesting introduction of West Germany's "indication model," where some guy poses inhumane questions and can judge you. These protests were for maintaining the DDR's first-trimester laws. And they were so strong that even two years after the counterrevolution two different laws continued to exist in East and West. The bourgeoisie feared this question could spark stronger protests against the *Anschluss* [annexation] of the DDR. Two whole years, and then the indication system was pushed through in the former DDR as well.

## DDR Bureaucracy Capitulates to SPD, Church

Twenty years after counterrevolution in the DDR, both state churches [Catholic and Protestant], whose church taxes are automatically collected by the bourgeois state, were complaining that too few people were attending church in the former DDR.

In the first years of the DDR, there was still quite a lot of support for the church, above all among women in the countryside. One of the first campaigns the church waged was for preservation of the old system of midwives, who attended

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# East German Women...

*(continued from page 9)*

families at home, and against the new state health centers. Women naturally realized the real advantages of obtaining better, more comprehensive medical treatment in a health center than a midwife could provide at home, and bit by bit the midwives were integrated into the health system. Between 1952 and 1959, in-hospital births rose from 50 to 86 percent. So the churches really lost out with this probing action. And then the churches intervened again massively over the DDR's family legislation, namely against women in production—women had to remain with the family. This naturally did nothing for the church's popularity, since women increasingly grasped how their participation in the production process led to more independence.

It really is a case of "being determines consciousness." Any need for the church simply disappeared over time for women in the DDR. And then the church sought to rise up with a campaign against the first-trimester abortion law of 1971. For the first time, a considerable number of no votes and abstentions were cast in the Volkskammer [People's Chamber, the DDR parliament] from the Christian Democratic Union, which had seats as a member of the National Front. But the forces of the church could not set the world on fire over this. Under capitalism, private ownership of the means of production, linked, as noted before, to inheritance laws and the bourgeois family, needs ideological sanctification by the church. Capitalism needs the church.

And in all class societies, this goes together with a more or less vigorous persecution of homosexuality. If private ownership of the means of production no longer exists, the church gradually loses its basis. Nobody has any use for it any longer, even though it may take years for its influence to diminish. In the DDR, this was such a long, drawn-out affair because the bureaucrats were hailing the family, thereby implicitly providing ammunition to the church! This glorification of the family in the DDR also brought with it ongoing, greater and lesser harassment of homosexuals, but there was a clear difference with the West and also with the East European states after counterrevolution: In the DDR there were no right-wing or Nazi bands roaming the streets terrorizing, for example, gay bars. There was some harassment, but it was really different from capitalism.

Then, in truly grotesque fashion, from the mid to late 1980s the DDR bureaucracy proceeded to provide ammunition to the church, which had basically been on its last legs with meager support—64 percent of the population did not belong to any denomination—through stupefying bureaucratic repression of all the dissatisfaction that was bubbling to the surface of society. In particular, the Protestant church, which was supported by the West German SPD right down to its last hymnal, made its "free zones" available for discussion and so was able to gain ground. While the Stalinist bureaucrats were rather hard on opponents from the left, they were oh-so-accommodating when it came to the rights and the "free zones" of the church. That's just grotesque: they assisted the church in becoming a factor in people's consciousness.

## Drawing the Lessons: We Communists Are the Memory of the Working Class

From the outset, there were countless men and women of every age in the DDR who consciously devoted themselves to "constructing socialism," to the extent that they understood it, even if their consciousness was often distorted. Literature, particularly from the first years of the DDR, shows people who were euphoric over the real possibilities for women and men that had suddenly become available to them, possibilities that their parents, especially their mothers, never had! In the 1960s, for example, many artists and writers sought to bring "art to the working class" and the working class to art—the "Bitterfeld Way"—

muvs.org

**Dr. Horst Theissen, imprisoned in West Germany in late 1980s for performing abortions.**

with slogans like "Reach for the Pen, Mate!" or, conversely, "Writers into Production!" Even if these were in part official slogans of the DDR bureaucracy, they were often seized upon enthusiastically. There were loads of women—Brigitte Reimann, Christa Wolf, Maxi Wander, many others—who wrote very interesting stuff about the situation of women, both in the early years, in the midst of this setting off for new horizons, and afterward. It's fascinating to read about this.

The proportion of women in the lower- and middle-functionary level in the SED and the state was quite high, among the people who actually kept things going

Spartakist

**Spartakist Workers Party at 1992 East Berlin march against reactionary abortion law extended from West Germany to the East as result of capitalist reunification.**

and organized things. But the higher you went in the DDR hierarchy, in the Central Committee or the like, the fewer women there were. The essential reason was that most women in the DDR had a family and children and hence a "second shift" that rested on them like a heavy yoke, so that they simply lacked the energy to fight their way upward. The ossified DDR bureaucrats at the top also emphasized, consciously, the important role of the "mommy." In the program of the Stalinists, the special oppression of women, which would have had to be fought through socializing housework, simply did not exist.

But the answer did not lie in making feminism palatable to the DDR bureaucracy, as suggested by West and East German feminists alike. The answer lay in counterposing a revolutionary Trotskyist program to the politically reactionary program of "socialism in one country." This is what Trotsky did and what we did in 1989-90. In January 1990, there was a giant pro-socialist, pro-Soviet demonstration in Berlin against a Nazi desecration of the Treptow memorial to the Red Army. At this giant demonstration of 250,000, which we had initiated, our comrades stood on the speakers platform, and for the first time in all those decades it was possible for Trotskyists to deliver a speech before a mass public in a deformed workers state. We called for the defense of the DDR and Soviet Union, for a new, revolutionary party, for political revolution and for the extension of the revolution to the West.

On the other hand, look at the programmatic spirit that permeated the Stalinist bureaucracy. It was not during the counterrevolution that this manifested itself for the first time in the DDR, though at that point it became crystal-clear. The SED renamed itself the SED-PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism], later just the PDS. And once Mikhail Gorbachev had given the green light to capitalist reunification in the name of the Soviet bureaucracy, Hans Modrow, speaking for the SED-PDS, promulgated the slogan "Germany, united fatherland." These Stalinist bureaucrats, who called themselves the leadership of the working class and who were seen by many DDR workers as such, suddenly told the workers that the sole possibility was capitalist *Anschluss* to West Germany.

This was not a sudden, panicked transformation: there was a whole history of this. For example, already in 1987 a joint declaration of the SPD and SED was published under the charming title "The Contest of Ideologies and Joint Security," in which the Stalinists simply crawled on their bellies before the SPD, pledging not to doubt imperialism's will for peace and foreswearing the "process of world revolution." Of course, they had already done this decades before, but now they put it down in writing again, emphatically. All of this was a prelude to Gorbachev's withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in the spring of 1989, leaving women in particular defenseless before the *mujahedin*, who had been financed by the CIA and imperialism. When the Soviet Army marched in, we said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend the gains of October to the Afghan peoples!" The woman question was an especially important aspect of our position. Gorbachev's withdrawal was a criminal betrayal.

Today, the remnants of the PDS are in the Left Party, which constitutes the second reformist mass party in this country—in Lenin's words, a bourgeois workers party. They are laboring alongside the SPD to chain the German working class to its imperialist exploiters by telling them that there is no alternative to capitalism.

Counterrevolution in the DDR, in the Soviet Union, in the East European deformed workers states hit women especially hard. This is something we have always emphasized. In the DDR, it particularly hit women with jobs in industry, which has been destroyed by an imperialist campaign of vengeance. The number of people who cannot find work and are today forced to survive on inhumanly low Hartz IV unemployment payments is particularly high in the former DDR, and it is single mothers who are especially hard-hit.

Now as before, we Trotskyists call for unconditional military defense of the states where capitalism no longer exists: today China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. These deformed workers states represent a conquest for the entire working class worldwide. Our program is for the working class—men and women—to sweep out the bureaucrats through political revolution and return to the road and program of the October Revolution. In capitalist countries, the bourgeoisie must be expropriated by socialist revolution. It is with this aim in mind that we are building our international party. We are the memory of the working class. We must carry this forward. We want to draw the lessons and learn from them, to prepare ourselves for victories. *Women's liberation through socialist revolution!* ■


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# Puerto Rico...

*(continued from page 12)*

March 7, students confronted Río Piedras chancellor Ana Guadalupe. Amid chants of "Resign!" the reviled administrator was shouted down at a meeting and literally run off campus, soaking wet from water doused on her by student protesters. With the security guards escorting her, the director of campus security received a cut under his eye and two windows of the campus security truck carrying Guadalupe were shattered.

With Fortuño pledging to throw the book at protesters, public condemnation of the activists was swift, including from their supposed supporters in the bourgeois Popular Democratic (PPD) and Puerto Rican Independence parties (PIP), as well as from Democratic U.S. Congressman Luis Gutierrez. In short order, the state slammed six students with charges that include "aggravated assault," "damage to public property" and "interrupting a lawful meeting," with bail totaling $60,000. Ibrahim García, a supporter of the Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores (MST), faces three years' imprisonment for allegedly assaulting the campus security chief. ***Drop all charges against Ibrahim García and all UPR protesters!***

García and fellow March 7 protesters Robin Torres, Karla Torres and Rafael Ojeda were suspended from the university and threatened with expulsion. Giovanni Roberto, a spokesman for the Organización Socialista Internacional (OSI), which is associated with the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S., is battling suspension and a ban from campus. Other suspended student leaders include Waldemiro Vélez, Adriana Mulero of the MST and Javier Andrés Córdova Sánchez, youth club member of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). Despite our political differences with the reformist MST, OSI and MAS, we call on trade unionists, campus activists and others to defend them and all other protesters against the repression and reprisals. ***Drop the suspensions! Na expulsians!***

Rivera Pichardo/El Nuevo Dia

**December 8: Organización Socialista Internacional leader Giovanni Roberto (left) appeals to campus administration's strikebreaking thugs, declaring, "We are not enemies, we are brothers."**

As the crackdown on the Río Piedras campus has shown, the capitalist state—the cops, courts and prisons—is a machinery of organized violence committed to enforcing the interests of the ruling class. On March 10, during the discussion at a "UPR No Se Vende" (UPR Is Not for Sale) forum at New York University, a Spartacist League comrade said, "It is important to understand that the police and the campus cops and the security guards are deadly enemies of the working class and student strikers. They cannot be won over to your cause. Their job description is to smash the strike." She asked OSI leader Giovanni Roberto why, one day after Capitol Security guards beat up a striker in December, he fraternized with those guards and told them, "We are not enemies, we are brothers," as we reported in "Support the Puerto Rico Student Strike!" (*WV* No. 972, 21 January).

He replied, "I hug other working-class persons [!] because I not only believe in socialism, I not only believe that the working class should be united; we need to do that in practice." Roberto proceeded to portray these hired guns as misguided black youth from the poor town of Loiza. After spitting on the basic Marxist understanding of the capitalist state and its auxiliaries, he concluded by scolfing that socialism is about what you do in practice, "not having the best theoretical perspective of how the revolution needs to be done."

What the ISO/OSI do in practice is tell workers, minorities and youth to embrace the very forces of the capitalist state whose job is to repress their struggles. The simple truth is that regardless of background, when a person becomes a cop or security guard he becomes a servant of capital. Anyone who has been dealt a blow by these attack dogs of the bourgeoisie knows firsthand that they are squarely on the other side of the struggle.

Our speaker at the March 10 forum observed that the problems Puerto Rican workers and their children face today can ultimately be resolved only by socialist revolution, not only on the island but crucially in the U.S. In mobilizing against their capitalist exploiters, the proletariat in the U.S. must fight for the right of independence for Puerto Rico and demand all U.S. troops and federal agents out of the island now. For Puerto Rican workers, fighting the imperialists and their lackeys requires a struggle against bourgeois nationalism, which promotes the false unity of workers on the island with the local bourgeoisie. Marxists fight for the political independence of the proletariat from all parties of the capitalist class enemy, especially those that falsely portray themselves as "friends" of the workers like the PPD, PIP and the Democrats. What is needed is the forging of revolutionary workers parties in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.■

# South Africa...

*(continued from page 12)*

struck in the early 1990s bringing to power the Tripartite Alliance of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU changed ***nathing*** in the super-exploitation of mainly black labour for the profits of a filthy rich, overwhelmingly white, capitalist class. The Tripartite Alliance is a bourgeois government responsible for maintaining neo-apartheid capitalism. This means brutal oppression of the black majority and defence of the rule and profits of the same old Randlords who ruled under apartheid, now supplemented by a thin layer of black capitalists and others who've enriched themselves by joining in the exploitation of "their own" people.

The reformist COSATU and SACP tops do all they can to cover up this basic fact in order to justify their grotesque class collaboration of participating in the capitalist government. COSATU and SACP leaders were among the most enthusiastic hackers of President Jacob Zuma as a supposed "friend" of workers. Since coming to power in 2009, Zuma has delivered on the promise of strengthening the repressive state apparatus to supposedly "get tough on crime," appointing Bheki "shoot to kill" Cele as police commissioner and unleashing the cops against public sector workers during last year's strike.

With the same nationalist class-collaborationist logic, the reformists embrace the strikebreaking thugs of the capitalist state as "comrades." For example, COSATU includes the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), while SAMWU and other COSATU affiliates organise security guards and cops and the SACP recruits cops into its own organisation. Whether black or white, the cops have the same job in the "new" South Africa as the police had under apartheid: to defend capitalist rule and profits by violently repressing workers and the poor. We oppose the inclusion of police or security guards in the unions and workers movement and fight for the complete independence of the workers movement from the bourgeois state. ***Caps, prisan guards and security guards aut of the unians!***

Protesters struggling against the brutal conditions in the mainly black townships have been particularly hard hit by police terror. Last September, cops in Free State province shot and killed Nontsikelelo Nokela, a 17-year-old pupil taking part in protests against being forced to take matric exams without adequate preparation. In February this year, Solomon Madonsela was killed and many others injured as police fired rubber bullets and live ammunition at protesters in Wesselton township in Ermelo, Mpumalanga, who were demanding jobs and service delivery. There were widespread reports of beatings and brutal torture by cops trying to extract confessions from protesters in police custody.

The situation cries out for the trade unions to mobilise to defend these protesters against the very same capitalist state which is shooting down trade unionists on the picket lines. Such a struggle, including championing demands addressing the burning needs of the township poor—decent, affordable housing for all; massive improvements in the township schools and infrastructure; skills training; and spreading out the available work amongst available labour with no loss in pay—would be a powerful action to build solidarity between the unemployed and the unions and undercut the attempts by the bosses and their government to pit them against each other. The participation of disciplined, class-conscious union marshals would also help to spike the outbreaks of anti-foreigner attacks which have become an increasing occurrence during the service delivery protests.

This requires a fight for a class-struggle leadership in the unions. The COSATU and other trade-union bureaucracies abandon the township poor to their fate out of class-collaborationist loyalty to the capitalist state which, in COSATU's case, they are a component part of administering through the Tripartite Alliance. Outrageously, the COSATU-affiliated National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa in Mpumalanga issued a February 16 statement ***condemning*** the victims of cop terror in Wesselton for their "violent protests"!

Immigrants from other African countries and Asia also feel the brunt of police repression, from raids on bars and nightclubs in heavily immigrant districts to daily harassment of hawkers, prostitutes and others trying to eke out a desperate existence. To cite just one example, in November 2009 an Angolan street vendor in Pretoria was shot and killed by two (allegedly drunk) off-duty cops when he tried to keep them from stealing his wares. As proletarian internationalists, we fight for the workers movement to take up the defence of these immigrants and to organise immigrant workers into the unions with full rights and benefits. This is both a defence of democratic rights and an act of class solidarity for the unions' own defence. ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No departatians!*** This call is particularly important right now, as the government threatens to begin deporting hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans and is proposing draconian amendments to the immigration laws.

In the weeks following the killing of Msiza and other attacks on the union (all of which took place in ANC-run municipalities), the leadership of SAMWU caused unease in the Tripartite Alliance by warning that they "find it impossible to convince our members and the community" to vote for the ANC in the upcoming local elections and demanding that the ANC leadership "intervene urgently to address our concerns." While COSATU spokesman Patrick Craven assured the ANC that this was "not a Cosatu position," ANC general secretary Gwede Mantashe, who is also a top SACP leader, arrogantly dismissed "grandstanding by the Samwu leadership who want to eat their bread and still have it."

Despite the hostile reaction by the Alliance tops, the SAMWU leadership's protests in fact have nothing to do with working-class independence from the bourgeois-nationalist ANC and everything to do with ***containing*** the anger of the union's working-class base within the framework of the Tripartite Alliance, a nationalist popular front through which the interests of the working-class base of the SACP and COSATU are subordinated to those of the capitalist exploiters. Thus the SAMWU leadership's resolution promotes the illusion that the ANC—a party of the bosses—can be made to be "worker friendly" if enough pressure is exerted.

This is a deadly illusion which will only continue to disarm the workers in the face of increased capitalist attacks and state repression. The working class can never wage a consistent struggle for its interests and those of all the oppressed if it is chained to the exploiters, their political parties and state through bourgeois nationalism. As long as capitalism exists, the gains which the masses have wrested through struggle will always be threatened. We fight to split the Tripartite Alliance along class lines as part of the struggle for a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party. This is the necessary instrument to lead the working class to a victorious socialist revolution that will shatter the capitalist state and erect in its place a workers state—the dictatorship of the proletariat. Break with the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance! For a black-centred workers government as part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa!■

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SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA
Break with the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance!
Fight for a Black-Centred Workers Government!

WORKERS VANGUARD

## True Face of Neo-Apartheid Capitalism

# Cops Kill Shop Steward on the Picket Line

**South Africa**

Losi/Pretoria News

**SAMWU strikers attacked by police outside Pretoria bus depot, March 3.**

*The following article was written by our comrades of Spartacist South Africa.*

On March 3, during an attack on a protest by striking bus and refuse workers in Tshwane (Pretoria), cops of the South African Police Service (SAPS) shot and killed Petros Msiza, a 43-year-old shop steward in the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU). Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, stands in solidarity with Msiza's union brothers and sisters and shares our grief with his family.

As a March 7 SAMWU statement denouncing the police killing rightly noted: "This is not the first of our members that have been shot, every few months the SAPS violently shoots at innocent protesting workers.... This attack and killing is an attack on the working class, not just SAMWU." In the same week as the killing, the Tshwane local government responded to SAMWU's "illegal" strike by firing some 1,000 municipal workers. A week later, some 22 SAMWU workers were arrested in Kempton Park on the East Rand outside Johannesburg during protests demanding the reinstatement of their shop stewards and the same pay as workers in other municipalities. We demand that charges be dropped and the workers be released.

The attacks on SAMWU, affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), come in the context of a sharp increase in murderous police violence and a general police clampdown on all aspects of life of poor and working people, leading the *Sowetan* (14 March) to warn of a "police state." A recent report by a member of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation reveals that the number of deaths from police shootings has more than doubled in the last five years to 568 deaths in 2009-2010—the highest level recorded since the Independent Complaints Directorate began gathering statistics on police abuse in 1997. The *Sunday Independent* (20 March) reported: "Police researchers and lawyers who specialise in litigating against the police have warned that anecdotal reports of giving electric shocks, suffocation and other apartheid-style torture methods have become more prevalent."

With mounting social unrest come increased attacks on democratic rights and threats of police bonapartism. Recently SAPS cops carried out a raid on the office of the so-called Public Protector, who is supposed to investigate government abuses of power, just one week after she announced an investigation into corruption charges against police commissioner Bheki Cele.

As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* (1917), "The state is an organ of class ***domination***, an organ of ***oppression*** of one class by another." The police killing of Petros Msiza is only the latest, most naked, illustration of this Marxist understanding of the capitalist state in neo-apartheid South Africa. While the rigid system of white rule through legally enforced racial segregation and subjugation was ended, the deal

*continued on page 11*

**Cops Off Campus!**

# Puerto Rico: Protest Repression Against Student Strike Militants

Leading student activists at the flagship Río Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) now face possible expulsion and new criminal charges as the university administration and colonial government try to stamp out protests against a steep tuition hike. These reprisals come on the heels of the hundreds of arrests and brutal repression meted out by Puerto Rican police forces during a two-month-long student strike this winter. The strike was provoked by the administration's plans to impose an $800 "special fee" on students, after the systemwide UPR student strike of April-June 2010 successfully beat back tuition hikes for the fall semester (see "Student Strike Shakes Puerto Rico," *WV* No. 963, 27 August 2010).

The fee, which increases tuition costs by about 50 percent, has forced thousands to drop out since it was implemented in January. As we stressed in our articles in support of the strikes, there should be free, quality education for all up through the university level and a fight to abolish the university administration, to be replaced by student, teacher and worker control.

To break the strike that erupted in December, the government dispatched SWAT units, snipers and hundreds of riot police, who invaded the Río Piedras campus for the first time in three decades. Meanwhile, the Puerto Rican Supreme Court declared the strike illegal. Since then, police have repeatedly and savagely beaten striking students. Testimony and video footage have surfaced documenting police torture techniques used against the students and sexual assault of young women who were arrested.

On February 9, baton-wielding riot cops ran amok, arresting at least 20 and wantonly assaulting students. In protest, members of the APPU professors union and the HEEND campus workers union walked off the job that afternoon in what became a 48-hour strike demanding an end to the police occupation. UPR president José Ramón de la Torre, who had invited the cops onto campus, officially requested their removal—and then tendered his resignation for "personal reasons." On February 14, Governor Luis Fortuño did order the withdrawal of most of the police, leaving behind a smaller cop presence on campus. We demand: ***All police, campus security and private security guards off campus!***

Ricardo Alcaraz

**February 9: Cops assault protester at UPR's Río Piedras campus.**

A student assembly voted the next week to temporarily lift the strike, although protests have continued. On

*continued on page 11*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 978

15 April 2011


## "National Unity": Bosses Profit, Workers Pay

# Japan Tsunami Disaster and Capitalist Criminality

Asahi Shimbun

*The following is bosed on reports from our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan.*

APRIL 12—The massive earthquake off the northeastern coast of Japan and the devastating series of tsunami waves were a human tragedy of immense proportions. What was once one of the more scenic areas of the country has been reduced to rubble, parts of which may be uninhabitable for decades due to radioactive contamination from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The area continues to be wracked by serious aftershocks: on April 7 an aftershock measuring 7.1 rocked a wide sector of the northeast, jolting the crippled nuclear complex once again and knocking out external power at three other nuclear facilities. Today, the Japanese government announced that the Fukushima plant had released so much radiation that the severity rating of the nuclear disaster was raised to the highest level—the same rating as that given to the 1986 Chernobyl accident in the former Soviet Union.

While tens of thousands have been listed as dead or missing, the exact number of people who lost their lives may never be known because whole families and sections of villages were swept out to sea. For almost a month after the tsunami, the 12-mile area surrounding the nuclear power plant was littered with up to a thousand bodies, victims of the tsunami. They were left there to decompose because the government, citing the elevated levels of radiation, refused to collect and hury them. Among the survivors, hundreds of thousands are still homeless, continually being shifted from one evacuation center to another, many still with not enough to eat. Many centers and even some medical institutions refuse entry to those who have not been issued a certificate and a badge they must display at all times showing that they have not heen exposed to radiation.

Doro-Chiba

**Top: Northern Japanese city of Natori devastated by earthquake and tsunami, March 13. Above: Nuclear cleanup workers, not given waterproof boots, were forced to use thin plastic bags to walk in radioactive water.**

The capitalist government is using the tragedy as a justification to regiment the population. Forty percent of the personnel of the Japanese armed forces have been deployed to restore "order" to the devastated areas. While urgently needed emergency supplies are held up by security checks in the spirit of the imperialists' worldwide "anti-terrorism" crusade, as well as stalled by the usual bureaucratic indifference, the bourgeois media tell stories of "looting" by desperate tsunami survivors and laud the army for its repressive measures. Meanwhile, the city of Minamisoma received hundreds of boxes of food and other supplies sent by individuals overseas after YouTube showed an appeal by the mayor describing residents facing starvation, trapped in homes and shelters while the nuclear alert prevented government shipments of food from arriving (*New York Times*, 7 April).

From the beginning, the government lied about the extent of the radiation leaks at the damaged nuclear power plant in an effort to placate the population. But, according to the Ministry of Defense, within five hours of the earthquake the prime minister had declared a "nuclear state of emergency," a clear indication that the bourgeoisie was immediately aware of the danger.

The cover-ups, disinformation and lics spewed by the capitalist government continue to endanger people in the affected areas and as far away as Tokyo, 150 miles to the south. While those with the financial means were able to flee to the western part of the country, the majority of the working class, especially the poor, the sick and the elderly, were left to fend for themselves. People were scrounging for food and emergency items such as bottled water, batteries and radios, which continue to be in short supply in the stores. Those caring for their infirm relatives were also trapped; in Japan, supposedly in deference to Confucian values of respect for one's ancestors, pensions for retired workers are very low, with responsibility for the elderly shunted off to the younger generation of workers.

In an atmosphere of "waiting for the full meltdown," people returned to the Greater Tokyo region and were then told that milk and some fresh foods contained traces of radiation, as did tap water. (Cynically and stupidly, the government told people to just boil their drinking water.) For three weeks, rolling power outages sporadically disrupted transportation and heating and lighting in homes, hospitals and businesses; energy use over the sweltering summer will likely be restricted. For four weeks, hundreds of heroic electrical power workers have been risking their lives in an effort to gain control of the nuclear power plant, exposing themselves to high doses of radiation, as the government redefines upward what it considers a "safe" level. Living in the nearhy areas, many of them had already lost their families and homes.

### Profiteering and Government Collusion

The 9.0 magnitude Tohoku earthquake and tsunami waves, which reached heights of 60 feet in some areas, were natural disasters. But the continuing unfolding

*continued on page 8*

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# April 1961

# Bay of Pigs: Cuban Revolution Defeated U.S.-Backed Invasion

This month we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the defeat of the CIA-organized Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion of Cuba, an attempt to overturn the social revolution that overthrew capitalism in 1960. The attack, launched on 17 April 1961 by counterrevolutionaries and mercenary ground troops using U.S.-equipped bombers, amphibious assault ships and tanks, was defeated within three days by heroic Cuban fighters. The social composition of the invading forces, documented by Cuban authorities, was revealing: 100 plantation owners, 67 landlords, 35 factory owners, 112 businessmen, 179 people living off unearned income, 194 former soldiers of the Batista dictatorship that had been overthrown by Castro's guerrilla forces.

The Bay of Pigs operation was ordered by Democratic president John F. Kennedy at the beginning of his term as Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism. JFK never forgave the CIA for the fiasco, whose planning had been authorized by the Republican Eisenhower administration a year earlier. Kennedy went on to tighten the U.S. embargo of Cuba and put his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, in charge of "Operation Mongoose"—a campaign of sabotage, destabilization and terror mobilizing the CIA and a range of government departments. The operation included repeated assassination plots against Castro and massive funding for a spy base in Miami involving Cuban counterrevolutionary *gusanos* (worms) and Mafiosi. In the October 1962 Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy took the world to the brink of nuclear war over Soviet nuclear missiles that were placed in Cuba, although later pulled out.

The intrigues and assassination attempts continued under both Democratic and Republican presidents. Last week, an El Paso federal court acquitted 83-year-old Cuban CIA-operative Luis Posada Carriles, a veteran of the Bay of Pigs, of charges of lying at an immigration hearing. This assassin is wanted by both Cuba and Hugo Chávez's populist capitalist government in Venezuela for the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airliner, which killed all 73 people aboard, and for masterminding hotel bombings in Cuba in 1997 that killed an Italian tourist and wounded 12 other people. The Feds prosecuted Posada Carriles on immigration charges as a way to circumvent extradition attempts by Venezuela. We say: Extradite Posada Carriles to Cuba!

Raúl Corrales

Bettmann

**Cuban fighters defeated counterrevolutionary 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion (above). Two years later, Cuban *gusanos* presented their sponsor, U.S. president Kennedy, with brigade flag (right).**

Although under the rule of a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, the workers and peasants of Cuba have gained enormously from the overthrow of capitalist rule on the island. When Castro's petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces marched into Havana in January 1959, the army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship shattered. The new government had to confront U.S. imperialism's mounting attempts to bring it to heel through economic pressure. When Eisenhower sought to lower the U.S. quota for Cuban sugar in January 1960, Castro signed an agreement to sell one million tons yearly to the Soviet Union. Refusal by imperialist-owned oil refineries to process Russian crude led to the nationalization of U.S.-owned properties in Cuba in August 1960, including sugar mills, oil companies, and the power and telephone companies. By October of that year, 80 percent of the country's industry had been nationalized. Cuba became a deformed workers state with these pervasive nationalizations, which liquidated the bourgeoisie as a class.

The elimination of production for profit and the introduction of a semblance of centralized planning on the island provided jobs, housing and education for everyone. To this day, Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in the world and a renowned health care system, with more teachers and doctors per capita than anywhere else. Infant mortality is lower than in the U.S., the European Union and Canada. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose nationalist program of "socialism in one country" is an obstacle to the necessary extension of socialist revolution to the Latin American mainland and, crucially, to the U.S. imperialist heartland.

The fight to defend and extend the Cuban Revolution has been a hallmark of our tendency from its inception as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Against the SWP majority, which equated the Castro regime with the revolutionary Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky, the RT fought for the understanding that Cuba had become a *bureaucratically deformed workers state*. Indeed, following the Bay of Pigs, the Castro regime tightened its political grip on the country. The Trotskyist press was suppressed, key labor leaders were replaced by Stalinist hacks, a one-party system was instituted, etc. The RT upheld the need to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties in Cuba and in the U.S., where the SWP majority was increasingly abandoning a revolutionary perspective, instead tailing Castroism and black nationalism.

Based on our analysis of the Cuban Revolution, the SL was able to extend Marxist theory to encompass how bureaucratically deformed workers states were created (see *Marxist Bulletin* No. 8, "Cuba and Marxist Theory"). In Cuba, a petty-bourgeois movement under exceptional circumstances—the absence of the working class as a contender for social power in its own right, the flight of the national bourgeoisie, hostile imperialist encirclement, a lifeline thrown by the Soviet Union—was able to eventually smash capitalist property relations. But Castroism (like other peasant-based guerrilla

*continued on page 11*

TROTSKY

LENIN

## Defend the Cuban Revolution!

*Fifty years ago, the Spartacist League's forebears in the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) advanced the call to defend and extend the Cuban Revolution. In a document presented to the SWP's youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), the RT upheld the need for a Trotskyist party against the liquidationist trajectory of the SWP leadership, which uncritically hailed Castro's petty-bourgeois forces as they were consolidating bureaucratic rule. Pointing out that the process in Cuba was that of the formation of a deformed workers state—i.e., a society akin to the Soviet Union under the Stalinist bureaucracy—the RT advanced a program of political revolution, which would open the road to Cuba's further development toward socialism in conjunction with the fight for world proletarian revolution.*

The full victory of every modern revolution, the Cuban revolution included, requires the emergence in a leading role of a mass revolutionary-Marxist party. The small Trotskyist groups, in Cuba and elsewhere, have a vital role as the nucleus of such parties. They can fill this role only if they continually preserve their *political* independence and ability to act, and if they avoid the peril of yielding to non-Marxist and non-proletarian leaderships their own ideological responsibilities and the historic mission of the working class.

In its relation to the Cuban revolution the YSA, like every revolutionary group, has two principal tasks:

a) To exert the utmost effort to defend the Cuban revolution not only against the military and other attacks of U.S. imperialism, but also against the political attacks of the social-democratic agents of imperialism.

b) To struggle for the development and extension of the Cuban revolution and against the attempts of counterrevolutionary Stalinism to corrupt the revolution from within. We seek to further this development and extension both by supporting revolutionary actions of the existing leadership and by constructively criticizing, openly and frankly, the mistakes and inadequacies of that leadership. Both to develop the Cuban revolution and to extend it throughout the Hemisphere, we base ourselves on the imperative necessity for the establishment of workers democracy and the formation of the mass party of revolutionary Marxism.

—"The Cuban Revolution," December 1961, printed in *Spartacist* No. 2 (July-August 1964)

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*

The closing date for news in this issue is April 12.

**No. 978** **15 April 2011**

# French, UN Troops Out of the Ivory Coast!

*The following is a translation of an April 4 statement issued by the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League. On April 11, the Ivory Coast's Laurent Gbagbo was arrested at the presidential palace by French troops and opposition forces.*

As of today, French and United Nations imperialist troops are openly intervening into the civil war in the Ivory Coast, attacking the presidential palace and military forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo with heavy artillery. We demand an immediate stop to the attacks and that all UN and French troops get out now! It is the duty of the working class in France to oppose this new bloody intervention of the French imperialist troops. We also protest against the manhunt of Gbagbo's supporters in the streets of Paris, where police arrested dozens yesterday and brought them to the Clignancourt police station in the 18th Arrondissement, and did so again tonight.

Our position these past few years had been that both sides in the Ivory Coast's civil war were equally reactionary, and in fact pro-imperialist, and that Marxists had no side in that conflict. The Gbagbo regime (which among other things granted the concession for Abidjan's port container terminal to [President Nicolas] Sarkozy's crony [industrial magnate Vincent] Bolloré) embraced the propaganda on "ivoirité." According to this notion, millions of people who have been living in the Ivory Coast (or who were born there) were transformed into non-citizens because they are part of ethnic groups in the north of the country or from neighboring countries to the north. This racist concept was developed by Henri Konan Bédié, currently allied with Alassane Ouattara, leader of the anti-Gbagbo camp. The troops of Ouattara, who used to be a general manager of the International Monetary Fund, recently slaughtered hundreds of people in Duékoué, in the western part of the country.

AP

French patrol in Abidjan, April 2.

What has changed is that the imperialists and in particular the French imperialists are now openly fighting on the side of Ouattara's forces. After likely preparing Ouattara's military offensive for a long time and providing him with weapons, the imperialists finally decided to intervene directly when the offensive stalled in Abidjan. As we wrote in "Carnage in Abidjan: Made in France—French and UN Troops Out of the Ivory Coast!" in *Le Bolchévik* [No. 170] in December 2004: "In any conflict between the French and Ivorian army (or Ivorian rebels), our side is unambiguously against our own imperialism." We also denounce the imperialist attack against Qaddafi's Libya, in which French troops are at the forefront, and defend Libya against this attack (see the March 20 statement of the International Communist League's International Executive Committee [*WV* No. 977, 1 April]).

French imperialism is responsible for the crimes committed today in the Ivory Coast. This situation is the legacy of a hundred years of colonialism, which exacerbated interethnic tensions leading to civil war in that country. Using as a pretext the November-December electoral farce which was fraught with fraud on both sides, imperialism, in particular French and American imperialism, has aggravated these tensions. Today French imperialism is directly taking part in the slaughter. We call on workers here in France to mobilize against the blood-soaked imperialists' new colonialist military adventure, without giving any political support to Gbagbo's bourgeois regime.

The Ivorian proletariat is surely weak and torn now by interethnic violence, but it is the only internal social force representing a future for the oppressed of that country. A workers revolution in the Ivory Coast must be tied to revolutions in African countries with a more powerful proletariat, notably South Africa or Egypt, and must spread to the imperialist centers, in particular France.

A substantial number of immigrants from the Ivory Coast and the broader region have come to France in the past few years and are today partly integrated into the proletariat in the Paris area and elsewhere. We fight for full citizenship rights for all those who have made it here. We fight to unite workers internationally and to forge an indissoluble link between proletarian revolution in the countries oppressed by imperialism and in the imperialist centers themselves, a link embodied by these immigrant workers.

*For working-class mobilizations in France against imperialist depredations in the Ivory Coast and in Libya! Defend Gbagbo's troops besieged by imperialism in Abidjan! French imperialist troops, UN troops out of the Ivory Coast, out of Libya, out of Africa! For Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard workers parties, sections of a reforged Fourth International!* ■

## Editorial Note

# The Anti-Union Drive and Black Workers

With anger growing among workers over the attacks on public sector unions, the labor officialdom thought it had to do something to blow off steam. "Unions Rally, Linking Their Cause to Dr. King" was the headline of the *New York Times* (4 April) reporting on the "We Are One" rallies held throughout the country protesting attacks on public workers unions and commemorating the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Larry Cohen, president of the Communications Workers of America, proclaimed, "We're putting all employers and all elected officials on notice that we're mobilizing as we haven't in decades." While the Port of Oakland was shut down when members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) overwhelmingly did not show up for work, the main "mobilization" was for tepid pro-Democratic Party rallies, organized by the labor bureaucrats who have overseen the decimation of the private sector unions with a loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The two capitalist parties, Democratic and Republican, play soft cop/hard cop with the public workers unions. The Democrats demand an arm and a leg, i.e., major concessions on wages and benefits, while helping enforce the anti-strike laws that affect most public employees. The Republicans demand massive concessions plus the abolition of collective bargaining, i.e., the gutting of the unions. During the just-concluded budget impasse in Washington, the only "debate" between the Democrats and Republicans was over just how much of essential services and jobs to cut. The union bureaucrats and black liberal politicians alibi the soft-cop Democrats by protesting against the hard-cop Republicans. In Madison, Wisconsin, the labor tops quashed any strike sentiment among trade unionists who showed up by the thousands to protest the Republican governor's assault on public workers unions, pushing instead a campaign to recall Republican legislators.

For black workers, who were hit disproportionately hard by the loss of manufacturing jobs in the Midwest and elsewhere, what is posed is an assault on the last major bastion of black employment with decent union wages and benefits. A New York City transit worker recently told *Workers Vanguard* that in talking about the protests in Madison over the new law against public sector unions, "I thought it was notable that a couple of my black coworkers expressed amazement that 'they're really going after *white* workers out there!'" A construction worker told *WV* that black workers at his union hall were saying, "If they're screwing over the white workers out there in Madison, they sure as hell are going to kick the shit out of us."

The labor misleaders who invoke the martyred King as a prophet of "patient moderation" carry on his bankrupt program of reliance on the Democratic Party, which is helping to *lead* the assault on labor and, together with the Republicans, enforces the brutal segregation of the mass of black people on the bottom of this society. Noting King's support for striking Memphis sanitation workers at the time of his assassination, Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10 Executive Board member, intoned that it is Wisconsin's "fierce resistance that is inspiring all of us today." The "resistance" the union bureaucracy displayed in Madison was its untiring efforts to stop any move toward using labor's strike weapon and to channel workers' anger into promoting the Democrats' electoral fortunes.

It will take hard *class struggle* to beat back the anti-union offensive. This perspective does require a political fight: a struggle to break the multiracial working class from the Democratic Party and to build a workers party that fights for a workers government.

* * *

**Flash**—The Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) is suing ILWU Local 10 and the local's president, Richard Mead, for the action taken by union members who overwhelmingly did not work on April 4, shutting down the ports of Oakland and San Francisco that day. The San Francisco Labor Council unanimously passed a resolution calling on Bay Area labor councils and the California AFL-CIO to protest this attack at the PMA's SF headquarters on Monday, April 25. *All out to defend the ILWU!* ■


*Spartacist League/SYC Forums*

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# German Reformists Tail Kurdish Nationalists' Appeals to Imperialism

The defense of the Kurdish people, an oppressed population in the Near East, must take as its starting point opposition to the imperialist powers. At a meeting in Berlin, Germany, last fall social-democratic journalist Nick Brauns and the Revolutionary Internationalist Organization (RIO) attempted to give a socialist veneer to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), effectively promoting its perspective of relying on the imperialists and their junior lackeys, the bourgeoisies of the region.

While we defend the PKK against state repression, including organizing international demonstrations in its defense, we give it no political support. The PKK is a petty-bourgeois nationalist organization based in Turkey with broad support in the émigré population in West Europe and elsewhere and has a shameful history of abject appeals to the Western imperialists and the Turkish state. Shortly after the U.S. imperialist invasion of Iraq, one PKK leader was quoted in the *Finonciol Times* explaining that "the movement" "wants to establish a dialogue with Washington on joining its campaign of democratisation in the Middle East" (15 April 2003). Some Kurdish nationalist organizations in Iraq have subordinated themselves to the U.S. imperialists' occupation forces.

RIO originated as a split from the youth organization of the ostensibly socialist Gruppe Arbeitermacht (Workers Power Group) and stands in that organization's tradition of promoting and apologizing for forces that are hostile to the interests of the international working class—something very much on display at this meeting. Against RIO and Brauns' class-collaborationist perspective, our comrades in the Spartakist-Jugend put forward the perspective that the liberation of the Kurdish people can only be accomplished through international proletarian revolution to establish a socialist republic of united Kurdistan within a socialist federation of the Near East. (See "Kurdish Struggle: Near East Flashpoint," *WV* No. 527, 24 May 1991.)

The following article was translated from the youth pages of *Spartakist* No. 186 (January 2011), the newspaper of the International Communist League's German section, the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands.

* * *

On 6 October 2010 Nick Brauns and RIO organized a discussion in Berlin "on the political crisis in Turkey, the workers movement, the Kurdish question and revolutionary perspectives." Capitalist Turkey, with its oil pipelines and where Europe's biggest NATO forces are deployed, is both a lackey and prized booty of the imperialists. Militarily subordinate to the U.S. and economically dependent on German imperialism, Turkey acts in their interests in the Near East. Since the mid '80s, the Turkish army, supported and armed by the U.S. and Germany, has waged war against the Kurdish minority, killing roughly 37,000 Kurds and burning thousands of villages to the ground. German imperialism has played a key role in the persecution of the Kurds—many of them workers in Europe—with its 1993 ban on the PKK and over 35 Kurdish organizations. Kurds are still ruthlessly repressed in Germany today (see "Stop the Deportation of Leyla!").

Comrades from the Spartakist-Jugend intervened at this meeting and put forward our perspective of fighting for workers revolution from Diyarbakir [Turkey] to Duisburg [Germany]. The Kurdish nation is divided among four capitalist countries—Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Therefore Kurdish national independence is possible only as part of the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East. Nick Brauns looks at things differently and set the tone for the conference with his presentation. He started with the repression of Kurds in the 1920s, when hundreds of thousands were dispersed and forcibly relocated in Turkey. However, he prettified the current petty-bourgeois nationalist Kurdish leadership, the PKK. He argued along the lines of his new book, *PKK—Perspectives on the Kurdish Fight for Freedom: Between Self-Determination, the EU and Islam*. He writes:

> "As important as it is to have a critical debate on the PKK program and its leaders' declarations, nevertheless this movement must not be judged solely on this basis. 'Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes.' This observation by Marx in 1875 applies all the more to an organization like the PKK, which operates in a political environment where written theory means little and a movement is judged by its actual impact and practical work."

Countless reformists have ripped this quote by Marx out of context and falsified it for their purposes. In fact, Marx was arguing against the Social Democracy's 1875 Gotha Program, which put forward a perspective of purely "legal means" and omitted any mention of the class character of the bourgeois state. The "movement" Marx spoke about was a *proletarian* movement, built *in opposition* to such constraints! As for the PKK, its "movement" and program are a dead end for Kurdish militants.

Since 1984, the PKK has waged a quite heroic military struggle against the heavily equipped Turkish army, acquiring mass support among the Kurdish population in Kurdistan and urban centers in Turkey and West Europe. However, the PKK is hostile to a class-struggle perspective, i.e., to breaking Turkish workers from Turkish nationalism and winning them over to the support of Kurdish independence. Turkish and Kurdish workers should fight side by side against their common class enemies, the Turkish bourgeoisie and its imperialist godfathers—Germany and the U.S.—and for workers revolution. The PKK's strategy, on the other hand, consists of using guerrilla struggle in order to get a seat at the negotiating table with the Turkish bourgeoisie and obtain whatever concessions they can within the framework of capitalism, which they explicitly accept. Their perspective is not connected to any fight for proletarian revolution in the developed capitalist countries, which is why the PKK has repeatedly tried to put pressure on the "democratic" imperialists to compel their Turkish NATO co-member to grant concessions.

With the counterrevolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of East Europe, the attacks on workers and all oppressed peoples have greatly intensified. After capitalist reunification [of Germany], Turkey was given tanks from the former East German deformed workers state by German imperialism, which were used to destroy thousands of Kurdish villages. When the Soviet Union was destroyed, the PKK lost its powerful military ally. Giving up the fight for independence, they turned to promoting a "Kurdish intifada" for "self-determination" within a "democratic Turkey," which Brauns in his presentation found "logical." Against Brauns' strategy of reconciliation with capitalism, a comrade from the Spartakist-Jugend put forward our Leninist-Trotskyist perspective:

> "We defend the PKK against the bourgeois state, of course, that's a precondition of any criticism—but we give them

*continued on page 6*

AP

Spartakist

**Left: Turkish troops invade northern Iraq in 2008 attack against Kurdish PKK. Right: Spartakists at February 2008 Berlin protest against the attack with sign (center) reading: "Turkish Army Out of Kurdish Regions! Imperialists Out of Iraq! Hands Off Iran!"**

WV Map

**Kurdish homeland was carved up as imperialists divided Near East at end of World War I.**

**For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!**

# Tear Up Conviction of Evan Emory!

# *Michigan Bigots Hate YouTube, Sex, Children*

On March 14, 21-year-old aspiring Michigan comedian, singer and songwriter Evan Emory pleaded no contest to charges of "unlawful posting of an Internet message with aggravating circumstances," agreeing to serve 60 days in jail with two years on probation and to perform 200 hours of community service. He originally faced a felony charge of "manufacturing child pornography," a charge that can carry 20 years in jail and 25 years more on the state sex offender registry. His "crime" was filming himself singing "Lunch Lady Land" to a group of first graders and, later, posting on YouTube an edited video that made it appear he was singing a song he wrote about sex to them. Even after Emory apologized repeatedly, removed the video from YouTube and expressed gratitude for his jail sentence, the witchhunt against him continued. One parent decried the plea bargain: "It was sexual and he should be put on the sex offender registry."

**Evan Emory sings in front of first graders in Ravenna, Michigan, in January.**

In an interview following his conviction, Emory made clear that he accepted the plea bargain out of fear of facing the rest of his life as a convicted "sex offender" and being listed on Michigan's sex offender registry. And with good reason. Signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1996, "Megan's Law" requires "sex offenders" to maintain constant contact with local authorities, who notify the neighborhoods where they move, go to school and work. Emory would have been condemned to live as a social pariah, a criminal for life, like the roughly 40,000 people already on Michigan's registry. Not only are those on sex offender registries subject to police harassment and public humiliation, sometimes driving them to suicide, but they are also prime targets for reactionary vigilante terror. In 2006, William Elliott, who spent time in jail in Maine for having a sexual relationship with his girlfriend when she was just days shy of 16 (Maine's age of consent), was murdered at his home. Elliott's name, address and photo had been listed publicly online.

The vindictive and obscene prosecution of Emory not only captures the rigidly conservative views of the small Michigan town he was charged in, but the overwhelming, puritanical anti-sex atmosphere of society today. "Sex crime" laws are increasingly being used to bolster state authority to intervene into the private lives of citizens and ensure that no deviation occurs from what bourgeois society says is "normal." "Age of consent" laws, for example, conflate rape with innocent consensual sexual acts, criminalizing acts based on mutual understanding and agreement because of the age of the people involved.

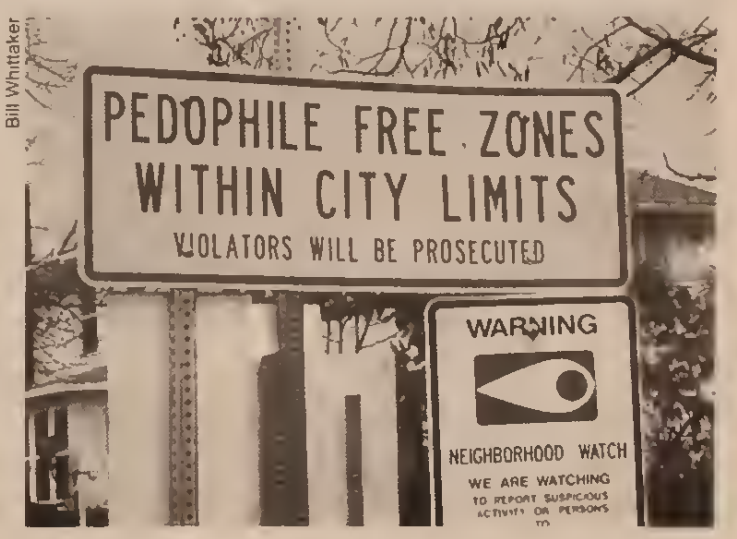
Given the tangle of race, sex and class in this bigoted society, even consensual acts can often be emotionally exploitative and unequal—but to call them "crimes" is to bring in the government, which is the very guardian of oppression and inequality. It is utter hypocrisy for the bourgeoisie to posture as "defenders of children" while they cut funding for education, lock up juvenile offenders in hellhole reformatories and send their "kill teams" to murder youth in Afghanistan.

While it is easy to point out the absurdity of Emory's case, the reality is that what happened to Emory is part of a broad campaign against even the most PG depictions of youth in sexual situations. For even joking about children and sex, Emory was railroaded to jail for "exploiting children." Child pornography, like any kind of pornography, is simply images and words intended for entertainment, and we are against its criminalization. The law defines child pornography as any sexual depictions featuring at least one person who's under 18, irrespective of whether they have consented to having sex—or whether they even had sex to begin with. The "child pornography" Emory was accused of making was about as pornographic as a Leno monologue.

Emory's case reveals American capitalist society's pathological fear of children learning about sex. What harm came to the class of first graders Emory filmed, even if they later watched it and began to wonder what Emory meant by "I'll lick on your chewie"? According to the father of one of the students, his daughter came home crying after being teased for appearing in the video. While this is a rather typical example of the cruelty children display toward each other, there was nothing wrong with Emory's video. The reality is that children learn about sex one way or another—whether seeing themselves in a humorous video or playing doctor. It is the social climate of religious backwardness and "family values" moralism that makes sex as scarring as possible and learning about it monumentally embarrassing. Further stigmatizing sex, the federal government funds "abstinence only" education that presents pregnancy or STDs as the punishment for teenagers who "disobey" the no-sex-before-marriage rule. Youth should be given a comprehensive, science-based sex education.

Along with the church and the state, the family is a key force for maintaining the capitalist order. The family is an ideological prison for youth and the source of women's oppression. For the capitalist ruling class, the family is a means for passing on property. For everyone else, the capitalists rely on it as a means to rear the next generation of obedient, god-fearing, sexually regimented wage slaves who have been trained to obey status quo mores or the belt.

The family as an economic unit must be replaced as part of building a classless, egalitarian socialist society, where sexual expression will no longer be distorted by the bigotry and oppression of capitalist society. Our task as the youth of the revolutionary Spartacist League is to help build the vanguard party that will champion the rights of all the oppressed and lead the working class in building a new society through the revolutionary destruction of the capitalist state and all its reactionary laws. ***Overturn his canvictian! Free Evan Emory naw!*** ■




**Sign posted in Wapello, Iowa, following 1996 passage of "Megan's Law."**

# Stop the Deportation of Leyla!

We reprint below a translated article by the Spartakist-Jugend, youth organization of the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands, from the January issue of *Spartakist* (No. 186). In February a German court temporarily suspended the deportation order against the young Kurdish woman known as Leyla, pending the outcome of a related court case. However Leyla still faces the threat of deportation.

On March 17, eight of the 18 Kurdish youth arrested for repelling a fascist attack were outrageously sentenced to 33 months in prison on charges of aggravated assault and "serious breach of the peace." Moreover, these leftists were ordered to apologize to the fascist scum and pay them 1,000 euros "for personal suffering." The prosecutors have announced plans to appeal the 33-month sentence and reintroduce the original charges of attempted murder.

* * *

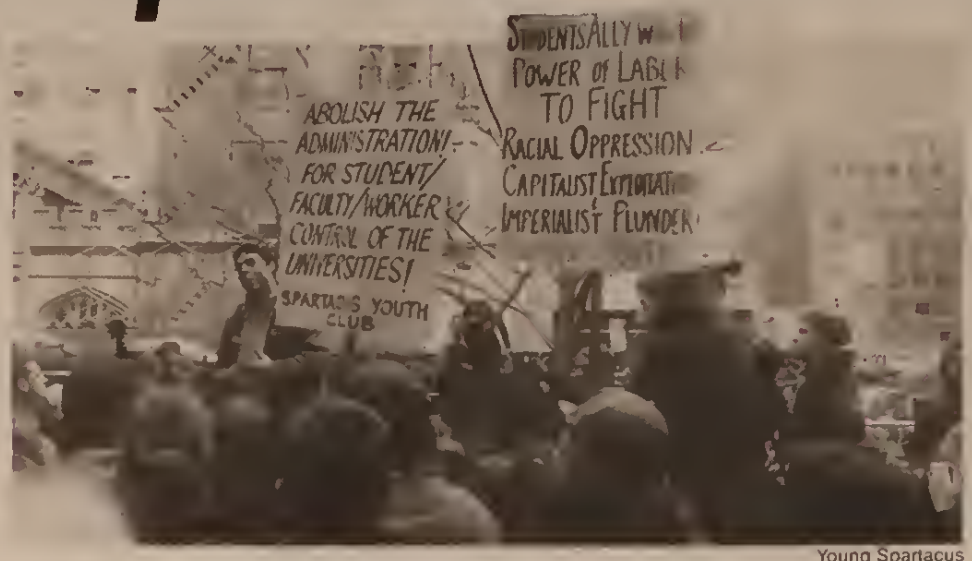
Shortly after her 18th birthday, Leyla received notiee of her deportation from Nürnberg, Germany. The "reason": she is a danger to German security since she took part in Kurdish demos and, at the age of 13, chanted an allegedly *verboten* Kurdish slogan. At eleven, Leyla was forced to flee with her family from Turkey because she is part of the Kurdish minority, which has been bloodily oppressed there for decades. Her apprenticeship has now been canceled because of the threatened deportation. Traumatized, she has been placed under psychological care. In imperialist Germany, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and other Kurdish organizations are banned as "terrorist," as are Turkish left groups like DHKP-C [Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front] and THKP-C [Turkish People's Liberation Party-Front]. Kurdish activists are regularly subjected to brutal state terror. The racist "war on terror," which initially put the Muslim minority in the crosshairs of state repression and ultimately targets the left and the workers movement, has escalated even further.

In [the southern German state of] Baden-Württemberg, 18 Kurdish youth were arrested for defending themselves against Turkish fascists in Nürtingen on May Day 2010. These youth have been charged with attempted murder and stand trial on January 17. One is being investigated under Paragraph 129 [of German criminal law] (membership in or support to a criminal organization). On December 16, three alleged members of the left group DHKP-C received heavy sentences for supposedly having been leaders and members of a foreign terrorist organization.

We Spartakists will publicize this state repression against Kurds and leftists in the workers movement in order to build solidarity with the victims. An injury to one is an injury to all. We demand: ***Dawn with the ban an the PKK and Kurdish arganizatians! Down with the ban an the DHKP-C and THKP-C! Dawn with the racist "war an terrar"!*** We join the protests against the deportation of Leyla and demand: ***Full citizenship rights far all who live here! Free the arrested Kurdish yauth!***

# Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

*The Spartacus Youth Clubs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary internationalist program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize youth in struggle as partisans of the working class, championing the liberation of black people, women and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in socialist revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.*




Young Spartacus

**SYC at demonstration in defense of public education at New York City's Hunter College, March 2010.**

## What We Fight For

**1** Mobilize students behind the social power of the multiracial working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Unionize the South! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the bosses' government and courts out of the unions!

**2** Black oppression is the bedrock of racist American capitalism. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! For mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the fascists and race-terrorists! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense! No reliance on the capitalist courts or politicians! Fascist terror is not a question of "free speech." Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

**3** For free, quality, integrated public education for all! Nationalize the private universities! Down with the racist purge of higher education—defend affirmative action, no to tuition hikes! No to budget cuts! For an end to tracking! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Down with police occupation of public schools! Cops off campus!

**4** For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For mass, labor-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free abortion on demand! For free, quality 24-hour childcare! For free, quality health care for all! Equal pay for equal work! Down with anti-gay laws! Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against consensual activities, called "crimes without victims," like pornography, gambling, drug use, prostitution and "statutory rape"!

**5** Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organize foreign-born workers into the unions! No deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Arab, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry!

**6** Down with the "war on terror," which is a war aimed at immigrants, labor, the left and minorities! Free all the detainees! Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! For labor mobilizations against racist cop terror! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against black and Hispanic youth! The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the workers and the oppressed. It must be smashed through workers revolution!

**7** Defend separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! Keep religion out of the schools! No prayer in the schools! Down with the teaching of creationism! For the teaching of evolution! No government funding for religious, private or "charter" schools!

**8** Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq. Afghanistan now! Down with the neocolonial occupations! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers at home! No illusions in the UN—a den of imperialist thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans, Haiti! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean! U.S. imperialist butchers: hands off the world! No to the draft! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military! Drive ROTC, CIA and police recruiters off the campuses!

**9** For international working-class solidarity! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! Workers of the world, unite! For unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism!

**10** Break with the racist, warmongering Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism! No support to any capitalist parties, including Greens! For a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

27 July 2010

*The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the revolutionary Marxist Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

## Kurdish...

*(continued from page 4)*

> no political support. Nick Brauns, on the other hand, throws sand in the eyes of Kurdish militants. The PKK no longer even espouses 'socialism in a fourth of a country' and openly appeals to the imperialist EU and the Turkish bourgeoisie. The only solution is a socialist republic of united Kurdistan—and that requires socialist revolution in four countries."

With regard to Turkey and other economically backward countries, we stand for Trotsky's program of permanent revolution—"that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses" (Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, 1930). This requires that revolutionary Trotskyist-Leninist workers parties be built in the Near East as part of a reforged Fourth International. As our comrade explained further:

> "The key is winning Turkish workers over to the defense of the Kurds and Kurdish independence. Therein also lies the connection to Germany: Kurdish and Turkish workers in Germany are a strategic component of the working class and can be a bridge to the struggles in Turkey. It is essential to fight for a revolutionary party to lead a political struggle against social democracy, including against Nick Brauns' employer, the Left Party group in the *Bundestag* [parliament]. The Left Party feeds illusions in a 'bourgeois-democratic' solution by looking to the EU. Meanwhile, the SPD [Social Democratic Party]/Left Party *Senat* [Berlin Senate] deports immigrants and its cops terrorize Kurdish activists. One must not forget that [Thilo] Sarrazin [longtime SPD member, infamous for anti-Muslim attacks against immigrants] was a rabble-rouser in the *Senat* for seven years. What's needed is a break with reformism, whether of the SPD or Left Party—for a revolutionary multiethnic workers party."

Simply a social-democratic follower of *Realpolitik*, Nick Brauns justified the politics of "collaboration across classes": it's "dictated by circumstances," since parties close to the PKK in Turkey, like the Peace and Democracy Party, are often the "major employers" because they run local bourgeois governments—against whom one does not strike. While posturing as an adviser to the Kurdish liberation movement, Brauns, a longtime collaborator of the Left Party *Bundestag* group, helps to chain Kurdish immigrants in Germany to the reformism of the Left Party. The Left Party and the SPD are bourgeois workers parties: they have a proletarian base but put forward a bourgeois program to help administer capitalism. Especially because the Left Party occasionally appears to oppose certain "excesses" of capitalism, it is often more effective than the SPD or bourgeois parties at pushing through capitalist attacks against the workers they lead and chaining them to the reactionary EU or German imperialism.

In his book, Brauns refers positively to a 2008 Left Party *Bundestag* proposition, which, according to him, demanded that "the peaceful solution of the Kurdish question should be put firmly in the center of the EU's treaty negotiations with Turkey"! That's an appeal to German imperialism, which plays a leading role in the persecution of the Kurds. Brauns only criticized the proposition's withdrawal—on the basis that it included a provision for the decriminalization of the PKK and other Kurdish organizations—when the Left Party cravenly capitulated before an anti-PKK campaign.

Aside from isolated grumbling, RIO counterposed nothing to Brauns' presentation. On paper they call for "dissociation from all bourgeois forces [in Turkey], whether AKP [the ruling Justice and Development Party] or CHP [Republican People's Party]"; they emphasize the significance of the working class; they criticize the trade-union bureaucracy; they argue against the subordination of workers as "junior partners in a bourgeois anti-

Spartacist

**Moscow, August 1991: Capitalist counterrevolutionaries fly Confederate flag on Yeltsin's barricades. Workers Power supporters bragged about joining them "no matter what the socially counterrevolutionary nature of Yeltsin's programme" (*Workers Power*, September 1991).**

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# Britain: For Class Struggle to Defend Public Sector Jobs!

*The following article is reprinted from* Workers Hammer *No. 214 (Spring 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.*

**WORKERS HAMMER**

Workers Hammer

Reuters

**London: As hundreds of thousands of trade unionists protested Conservative government's austerity plan on March 26, Labour Party leader Ed Miliband proposed own program of cuts.**

On 26 March, a massive turnout of up to half a million trade unionists demonstrated in London against the savage budget cuts announced by David Cameron's government. The demonstration consisted of a sea of trade union banners, representing local council workers, teachers and lecturers, health workers and firefighters—in a show of anger against the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government's assault on healthcare, social services, pensions and much more. The public sector jobs massacre saw 132,000 jobs lost in 2010, while the overall unemployment figure stands officially at 2.5 million, the highest for 20 years.

Low-paid public sector workers, a high proportion of whom are women and minorities, are the core of the trade union movement today. But rather than a strategy to mobilise that social power for a class-struggle fight to defend jobs, the TUC's [Trades Union Congress's] "March for the Alternative" was intended to channel this anger into supporting another Labour government. For the first time in over a dozen years, a trade union demonstration in Britain was addressed by the Labour Party leader. Ed Miliband, who was elected leader last September with the support of the trade unions, intoned on the platform that "there is an alternative," adding that "there is a need for difficult choices, and some cuts" to reduce the budget deficit, but this government "is going too far and too fast." For a clue as to what Miliband's "alternative" might be, one only has to recall that before the last election Labour promised cuts deeper and tougher than under [1980s Tory prime minister Margaret] Thatcher.

Deep cuts, fast or slow cuts: these are the "choices" being offered to the working class by the servile trade union bureaucracy. Throughout Europe—from Greece to Ireland and Spain—every capitalist government is trying to force the working class to pay for the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression—a crisis that was caused by the capitalist system itself. An effective defence of jobs today requires hard *class struggle*—strike action across the public sector. But the trade union leadership is an obstacle to the kind of fight that is necessary because they too share the political framework expressed by Miliband, that the alternative to "Tory cuts" are Labour government cuts.

The ground for the present devastating public sector cuts was prepared by 13 years of Labour governments that relentlessly attacked jobs, pensions, health and education services; froze pay below inflation and slashed tens of thousands of civil service jobs. And all the while, the union leaderships stood by and refused to lead battles against the Labour government. Recall then FBU [Fire Brigades Union] leader Andy Gilchrist calling off the firefighters strike in 2002 when it threatened to "hinder" the armed forces preparing to invade Iraq.

Visit any of the public sector unions' websites and find "alternatives," *not* for a fight to beat back the rapacious bourgeoisie *but for solving British capitalism's budget deficit*. [The public sector union] Unison's recipe calls for "a 50 per cent tax on bankers' bonuses" and a "Robin Hood Tax" on bank transactions. The Public and Commercial Services union, which organises civil servants, offers similar counsel to the bourgeois rulers including "We could free up billions of pounds by not renewing Trident [submarine-launched missile system]."

The "socialist" outfits who ride Labour's coattails look to none other than the bold class warriors of the TUC to call a general strike, while cravenly rebuilding illusions in the election of a Labour government. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) runs the National Right to Work coalition, whose slogan is "Break the Con-Dem Coalition!" (read: and replace it with a Labour government). When Ed Miliband won the Labour leadership contest last year, they enthused that his win was "another avenue to bring pressure to bear on Labour to fight" (*Socialist Worker*, 25 September 2010). In the meantime a poster on their website lists their own recommendations to the capitalist rulers, "Why There's No Need to Slash Spending." Cuts can be avoided by taxing the rich, clamping down on tax evaders, and cutting defence spending—the tired, hopeless call of reformists everywhere to reorder the priorities of the capitalists in favour of the working class.

The Socialist Party, after calling for a one-day public sector strike and a 24-hour general strike, go on to showcase their abiding faith in the capitalist state, and Labour, approvingly quoting an article from Labourlist.org: "A cascade of 'no cuts' budget decisions by local authorities could be the most effective resistance to the cuts so far." The Socialist Party continues, "By using their reserves and borrowing powers to avoid making cuts, councils can gain time to build a mass movement in their support," and "Ed Miliband could promise that an incoming Labour government would write off all local authority debts incurred from avoiding cuts" (*Socialism Today*, March 2011).

What is necessary to fight against the massacre of public sector jobs and social services is to mobilise the multiethnic working class in a fight for ***jobs for all***, through a shorter work week with no loss in pay, and to undertake union organising to draw into their ranks all of the working class, including its minority and immigrant components. In the course of class struggle, workers must replace the Labourite cringers atop the unions with workers' leaders who aim to win battles on the picket lines. Striving to forge such a ***class-struggle*** leadership of the unions is an integral part of the fight for a multiethnic revolutionary workers party whose aim is no less than doing away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution.■

## Young Spartacus

imperialist front" and they note that a "revolutionary party" is lacking. However, the emptiness of RIO's call for a "common revolutionary organization of the workers of all nationalities" was clear from its joint statement with Nick Brauns, which called on the PKK (vaguely described as "the Kurdish movement") to implement the following demand: "The Kurdish movement, as the only left-wing mass movement in the region, only has the option—if they do not want to resign to another 25 years of oppression and minimum concessions—to launch an international movement of the exploited" ("For a Socialist Kurdistan," 1 December 2009).

Like Nick Brauns, RIO is merely a left appendage of the Left Party. While RIO's predecessor gave "critical support" to the PDS/Left Party for years—even as these parties helped run capitalism in Berlin and [the northern state of] Mecklenburg-West Pomerania—RIO prefers an indirect approach for now. RIO builds platforms for the Left Party while subordinating its criticisms in the service of "unity" with its bloc partners, the Sozialistische Alternative [German section of the Committee for a Workers' International], the Left Party youth group Solid, and Nick Brauns himself, who all want to pressure the Left Party "to the left." Against this strategy, we Spartakists wage a political struggle to ***break*** workers and youth from the SPD and Left Party and win them to the fight to build a revolutionary multiethnic workers party.

RIO's performance on permanent revolution is no better:

> "Only the working class in Turkey and Northern Kurdistan is in a position to break with imperialism, the feudal structures and the autocratic state apparatus. But the workers can not separate the bourgeois-democratic program from the socialist tasks. Only a program of permanent revolution can significantly change Turkey."
>
> —"Class Struggle Under the Crescent Moon," *Revolution*, September 2010

But in the end, RIO itself falls short of the socialist tasks and offers instead only democratic demands ("For the unconditional right of self-determination of the Kurdish people!") and trade-unionist ones ("For elected strike committees!"). Even with their demands "For the occupation and nationalization of all enterprises that threaten layoffs or closure, under workers' control!" and "For a program of public works to end unemployment and underdevelopment, under the control of workers' organizations!" theirs is a reformist caricature of the Transitional Program, because what's missing is exactly what constitutes the core of permanent revolution: the revolutionary ***overthrow*** of the bourgeoisie and the ***seizure of power*** by the working class supported by the peasantry.

This is not surprising. Along with its ideological forebears, the Gruppe Arbeitermacht, which stood on [Boris] Yeltsin's barricades for capitalist counterrevolution in Moscow in 1991, RIO is pleased by the reconstruction of capitalist rule in the former Soviet Union: "Today, after the collapse of the Stalinist Soviet Union and the advancing crisis of capitalism, the conditions for us revolutionaries have gotten better" (*Revolution*, 24 April 2006). In their own way, RIO confirms Trotsky's basic point: whoever doesn't defend old gains can never achieve new ones. As Trotskyists, unlike RIO and Nick Brauns, we defended the Soviet Union against capitalist counterrevolution and today stand for the military defense of the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialism and counterrevolution. We fight for the overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracies in those countries through political revolution and for building workers and peasants councils. This is an integral component of our fight for new October Revolutions worldwide. The fight against the national oppression of Kurdish people will be a crucial driving force for socialist revolution throughout the Near East and in Germany.■

# Japan...

*(continued from page 1)*

crisis at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station is purely *man-made*, a product of the predatory nature of the capitalist order which values above all else its profits and disdains safety and human life.

As scientific socialists, we are for developing and using energy sources for the benefit of mankind. When the workers of the world rule our planet, energy will be generated and used in the most rational, efficient and safe manner possible, including by developing new energy sources. We have noted that nuclear power plants pose particular risks, leading to the suggestion that they ought not to be located in proximity to major population centers or upwind of them. But there is no means of generating energy that can be safe so long as the controlling principle of the economy is the drive for profit for a class of exploiters who own the means of production.

Under the rule of the capitalists, for whom workers are just a different form of raw material to be used up, hydroelectric dams and natural gas mains will never be made safe from the possibility of large-scale accidents threatening whole communities. Preventable accidents at oil drilling platforms and coal mines claim many lives; more quietly, in the United States, 1,500 retired coal miners die horribly from black lung disease every year. In 2008 the U.S.-based biofuels racket provoked a shortfall in the food grain harvest, helping trigger a world food crisis—producing corn ethanol fuel was more profitable at that moment than growing food that people could eat.

The example of Japan demonstrates the inherent irrationality of the capitalist system and underscores the need for an ***international planned economy in a socialist world***. Japan historically has been a country with scant natural resources along with a dense population. Having closed its last coal mine in 2002, it now imports close to 90 percent of its oil needs from the Near East. In an attempt to attain energy self-sufficiency, this country, which sits atop a patchwork of fault lines, gets close to 30 percent of its electricity from its 55 nuclear reactors (and had plans to increase that to 50 percent).

Illustrating capitalist irrationality on a smaller scale, one factor that contributes to the present power shortage is that the private power companies, which basically hold monopolies for particular regions, produce electricity at different frequencies. The electric power industry was brought to Japan during the era of the Meiji Restoration in the late 1800s. Its construction was marked by fierce competition between the bourgeois class of different areas: the Tokyo-based bourgeoisie imported generators from a German company using 50 Hertz alternating current, while the Osaka-based bourgeoisie imported from General Electric, which used 60 Hertz. With only three small frequency converter stations with limited capacity, electricity generated in the western part of the country cannot be easily transferred to the eastern area.

Reuters

**Food distribution line in Ishinomaki, April 3.**

Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) is one of ten utility companies in Japan. The fourth-largest private utility in the world, TEPCO supplies Japan's most industrialized and populous region. Last year it netted a profit of 140 billion yen ($1.66 billion), mainly due to exorbitant electricity fees and the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency turning a blind eye to safety violations. In addition, the company instituted cost-cutting measures: inadequate maintenance at outdated facilities, depriving workers of safety equipment and using contract labor and temporary employees.

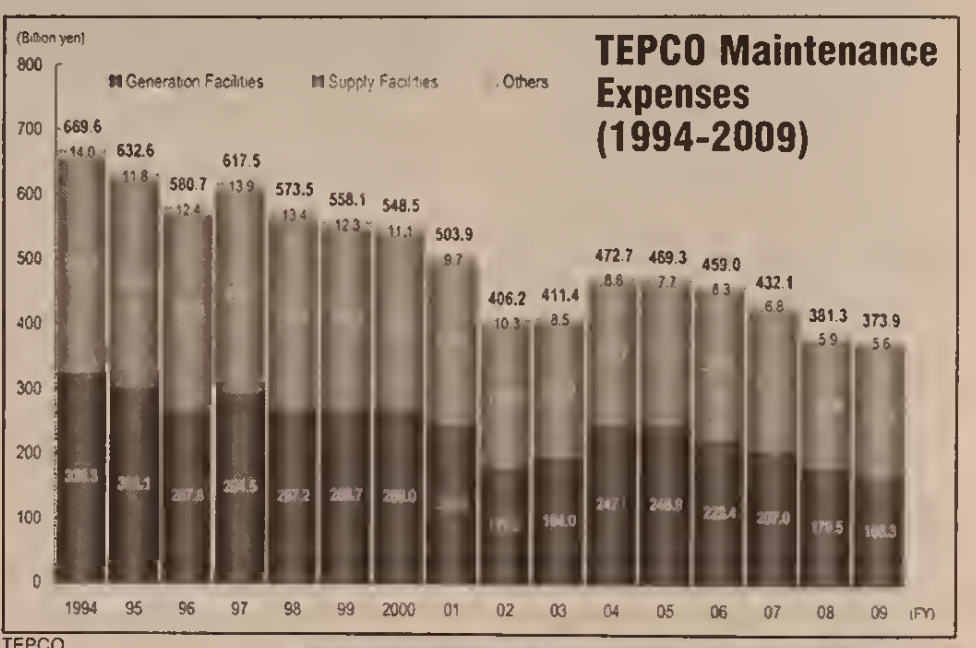
In 2002, TEPCO admitted submitting false data on inspection records for its nuclear reactors hundreds of times over the course of years. This included at least 29 cases of falsified reports on cracks or signs of cracks in devices in the core structure of 13 reactors at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear plant in Niigata Prefecture and those of the No. 1 and No. 2 Fukushima plants.

Kashiwazaki-Kariwa is the world's largest nuclear power plant. Following an earthquake in 2007, TEPCO falsified the amounts of radioactive substances that leaked into the air and the Sea of Japan. In the aftermath, to compensate for money lost by shutting down the plant for inspection and repair, the company cut maintenance expenses for all its plants.

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is TEPCO's oldest nuclear facility. Built in the 1970s, it houses six reactor units and sits atop a known fault line. Designed by General Electric, the No. 1 reactor at Fukushima Daiichi was scheduled to be decommissioned in February. But it was given a ten-year extended license despite warnings that its backup power generator was vulnerable to water damage. This plant in particular has a record of unsafe practices, repeatedly missing safety checks over a ten-year period, right up to two weeks before the earthquake. A report submitted by TEPCO to the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency on February 28 admitted that it failed to inspect 33 pieces of equipment in all reactors at the Daiichi plant, including a motor and backup power generator for the No. 1 reactor. In another deadly cost-cutting measure, the company opted to store spent fuel on site rather than invest in safer storage options. At the time of the earthquake, *six years' worth of uranium fuel rods* had piled up.

As far back as 1972, the U.S. nuclear regulatory agency reported that General Electric's reactor design was more prone to radiation leaks than other designs. Four years ago, a TEPCO research team warned the company that the plant was not adequately protected against earthquakes and tsunami, noting that its seawalls were not high enough. Studying the pattern of earthquakes in the area over centuries, the team argued that a strong quake and tsunami were long overdue, with a 10 percent possibility that the 40-year-old complex would be overwhelmed. TEPCO officials ignored this report.

We fight for workers revolution in Japan to take industry out of the hands of the profit-bloated capitalist owners. Throughout industry we fight for union control of working conditions and, where there are specific hazards, union action to shut down operations. This requires concerted efforts to organize the nuclear power industry as well as the increasingly prevalent non-union suppliers and contractors throughout industry as a whole. But the sellout bureaucrats at the head of the unions see themselves as "partners" of the Japanese capitalists. Protecting the profitability of the system, they do not act to defend their own members, much less the working people more generally. We fight for a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions that will fight for the expropriation of the energy bosses without compensation under a workers government. Striving to forge such a leadership is an integral part of the fight to build a revolutionary workers party whose aim is to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery.




TEPCO

Getty

**TEPCO corporate graph shows ever-decreasing maintenance outlays by company, which reported $1.66 billion profit in 2010. Right: Protesters denounce TEPCO's negligence and lies outside company headquarters in Tokyo, March 30.**

## Fukushima Workers

On March 19, the Partisan Defense Committee—the defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/U.S.—sent a message to the Federation of Electric Power Related Industry Workers Unions saluting the nuclear workers' heroism:

> "The valor and dedication of the Fukushima Daiichi workers stand in sharp contrast to the parasitism and greed of the owners and managers of TEPCO and their unofficial spokesmen in the government. They have endangered the population with their obfuscation and mismanagement. For the capitalists in every country and every industry, the overriding concern is their profits and not the safety of the workers or the interests of society as a whole."

To date, 21 workers are reported to have been exposed to possibly deadly amounts of radiation while trying to bring the Fukushima plant under control. Many more will become sick: the government recently announced that it will take months before the radioactive leaks can be plugged. The long-term effects of radiation sickness and the various radiation-induced cancers these workers will suffer from cannot now be known, but it is certain that many will die a painful death. We demand free lifetime health care for these workers and their families.

The approximately 400 workers now risking their lives are viewed as disposable by the company. They have not even been supplied with enough dosimeters, which measure radiation levels; some only have gauze-like outer suits that have been substituted for regular protective jumpsuits; there are not enough protective boots to go around, so some workers are made to wrap plastic garbage bags over their shoes; they lack proper gas masks.

According to Kazuma Yokota of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, these workers sleep on the floor of a building near the reactors that is covered with a sheet containing lead to block out radiation. They wrap themselves in blankets and sleep huddled together. For about three weeks, until a public outcry, they had only two meals a day: biscuits and juice in the morning and boil-in-the-bag rice and a can of food in the evening. Initially there was only one bottle of water available per person per day.

In a country that prides itself on innovation and the use of robotics, no robots were available at Fukushima. Professor Satoshi Tadokoro, Japan's leading rescue robots researcher, said that his team had been working on developing robots that could be used in this type of situation, but this research was discontinued. "Power plant companies mentioned that they did not need such robots because their nuclear power plants never have accidents and are safe" (quoted from the Web site of Texas A&M University's Center for Robot-Assisted Search and Rescue). A French firm shipped robots immediately after the tsunami, but the Japanese government stopped them from being delivered because the shipment had not been made through proper channels.

The Origins of Japanese Communism, Debate over "Two-Stage Revolution" and the American Occupation

**The Meiji Restoration: A Bourgeois Non-Democratic Revolution**

SPARTACIST

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Taking a cue from its bigger brothers, GE and Westinghouse, which sent squads of black workers to Japan in the 1970s to perform similar jobs at nuclear plants, TEPCO has a history of hiring Burakumin (Japan's caste of "untouchables") and day laborers from the slum districts of Sanya in Tokyo and Kamagasaki in Osaka as temporary workers. Known as "*genpatsu* (nuclear) gypsies," these workers are not unionized. Usually hired through subcontractors, they travel from plant to plant, labor under lower standards for radiation exposure than regular workers, and get inferior wages and benefits. In the 1980s, attempts to unionize this workforce were thwarted by thugs who threatened to harm union leaders' families.

At the Fukushima Daiichi plant last year, 89 percent of the workers were temporary workers (*New York Times*, 10 April). Their "normal" work includes scrubbing radioactive dust from the hundreds of parts inside the reactors using brushes and rags. Now they are on the front line of efforts to cool down the contaminated plant, at horrendous personal risk.

## Reactionary "National Unity" Crusade

The sudden movement of the Pacific tectonic plate under the North American plate caused the March 11 earthquake, producing a rupture 186 miles long and 93 miles wide in the sea floor. The main island of Honshu was moved eight feet east and the axis of the Earth shifted by four inches. The political and economic ramifications for the populace have also been jarring, with the bourgeoisie using the dire situation for a massive "national unity" campaign in order to escalate attacks on the working class. While working to strengthen its repressive state apparatus, the bourgeoisie presents the Japanese military, a player in the imperialist wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, in the guise of a "humanitarian" force.

There is a lot of justified anger and frustration within the population at the gross incompetence of the capitalist government following the disaster and at the continuing cynical cover-ups. As revolutionary Marxists, we seek to turn this distrust and anger into a broader understanding within the proletariat of the need to overthrow this irrational capitalist order through workers revolution. In contrast, the reformist left seeks to channel the various discontents and frustrations of the workers and oppressed into a campaign to strengthen illusions in the bourgeois state.

Concerned about growing popular anger over its cover-ups, the government rolled out that feudal remnant, Emperor Akihito, to give his first-ever televised statement. This backfired, reinforcing suspicion that the situation was out of control. With less than a 20 percent approval rating prior to the earthquake and an economy in worse shape than that of any of the major imperialist powers, Prime Minister Kan of the Democratic Party, the fifth prime minister in four years, tried to prod the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which ruled Japan for decades, into a "national unity" government. Under the given conditions, the LDP is not in a hurry to share the responsibility. But the reformist Japan

EPA

**March 21: Firemen battle fires in neighborhood in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, still smoldering ten days after disaster struck.**

Communist Party (JCP), always ready to show its loyalty to the bourgeoisie, announced on March 14 that the upcoming local elections should be postponed because, in party chairman Shii's words, "Now is the time for the whole nation to concentrate on rescue and recovery, regardless of ideological differences." The Social Democratic Party (SDP, formerly Socialist Party) similarly opines that the "national state crisis" requires "a collaborative framework of all political parties."

## Militarization of Aid and the Reformist Left

The declaration of a nuclear emergency gave the green light for the deployment of the military—named the "Self-Defense Forces" (SDF)—placing northeast Japan under virtual martial law. In the largest military mobilization since the end of World War II, more than 100,000 military personnel and reservists, 209 helicopters, 321 airplanes and 57 ships have been deployed.

Legislation allowing the government to mobilize its military so smoothly was crafted under a previous government, that of the coalition led by SDP prime minister Tomiichi Murayama, following the 1995 earthquake in the city of Kobe. Passed in 1999, the law mandated the militarization of seaports, airports and civilian medical personnel in times of "perilous situations."

By law, firemen are considered part of the state. But unlike the cops and soldiers, firemen are workers who perform a useful social service. We support the efforts of Japanese firemen to organize a union to represent them. The bourgeois media has virtually ignored the efforts of the nuclear power workers and the firemen in Fukushima. In contrast, SDF personnel are portrayed as heroes. The SDF's official mandate is to provide transportation and help with distribution of relief supplies, but the reality tells a different story.

Aid and supplies from other countries sat in warehouses for weeks when they were not simply rejected. Blankets from Indonesia were refused because they were supposedly too thin; 15,000 tons of rice from Thailand were rejected outright; one ton of medical supplies from Ukraine, including iodine pills, was not allowed into the country because it was "not certified for use" in Japan; Singapore had to hire private trucks to deliver supplies to quake-hit areas. Reminiscent of the aftermath of the Kobe quake, when the government delayed supplying even basic necessities, *yakuza* (organized crime) gangsters managed to deliver tons of materials to the evacuees.

Many evacuees have complained that for weeks they got nothing to eat every day but a rice ball, a cup of noodles and some water, if they were lucky. Trade unionists and others who have traveled to the north in search of relatives and to bring supplies reported that for weeks the military has blocked aid from getting to those in need, stopping civilians' cars because the SDF had to "secure the rescue routes." Vans with supplies have been turned away on main highways; railway and bus stations are reportedly under SDF control. In the cities and towns, the SDF is also deployed for "anti-crime" patrols alongside the police (*Asahi Shimbun*, 4 April).

Reuters

**April 2: Prime Minister Kan addresses army troops deployed in Fukushima Prefecture under "nuclear state of emergency," as Japan undertook largest military mobilization since end of World War II.**

The liberal bourgeois *Mainichi* and *Asahi* daily newspapers have called for streamlining government agencies to establish a central command system similar to that launched after the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake. The 1920s in Japan, marked by anti-Communist witchhunts under the "Peace Preservation Act," were the period when right-wing militaristic cliques gained the ascendancy in the government.

In keeping with its underlying social-patriotic reformism, the bulk of the Japanese left lines up in support of the "emergency" measures and sometimes complains that the militarization of society is not sufficiently centralized or effective. It is not only the social democrats and so-called Communists who speak in this vein; the smaller groups sometimes described as "New Left" mainly do, too. These organizations historically are characterized as having claimed the terrain of the "third camp" between imperialism and the former Soviet Union, which is a thin veneer for lining up directly with their "own" ruling class.

Thus, the basic criticism of the government raised by the Kakumaru group is that it has not sufficiently mobilized the military to defend and protect the people, complaining that "the army was dispatched piecemeal" and too slowly and that the "government, the national military, local authorities as well as the police have not set up a unified information center" (*Kaiho*, 15 March). The JCP and Kakumaru have been demanding the publication of pictures of the areas hit by the tsunami taken by satellites put in space to spy on the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states. Kakumaru writes: "The government should first of all utilize the information collection capabilities of the Japanese national military and fully employ the spy satellites in order to understand the full extent of the devastation in all areas" (*Kaiho*, 15 March). Kakumaru also demands closer collaboration between the army and the cops.

The Chukaku group, meanwhile, takes a more oppositional posture toward the government but still pushes the illusion that the Japanese imperialist military can be made to serve the people. They complain that "the maintenance of national security is given a higher priority and the saving of lives and the provision of aid goods [by the SDF] are put on the back burner" (*Zenshin*, 21 March). While they raise a correct call for "autonomous" efforts by the working class to support the victims of the disaster, they simultaneously claim that soldiers are part of the working class. This notion is an obstacle to the proletariat achieving elementary class consciousness. Seeking to help capitalism readjust its priorities, they argue to "cut military spending" rather than subsidies to poor families. Chukaku's reformist orientation is to appeal for upholding the bourgeois Constitution and to work toward a less reactionary government within the capitalist framework; the main slogan of their March 12 emergency statement is to "fight against neo-liberalism."

One of the main demands of the Kakehashi group, sometimes falsely identified as Trotskyist, is for the immediate closing of all nuclear power plants. Like the more mainstream crusaders for "green" politics, they see technology as more of a problem than capitalism. They are also in sync with the SDP, which calls for "turning away from nuclear power." The JCP, for its part, does not call for the abolition of nuclear power, having long had an explicit nationalist position for Japanese self-sufficiency in energy. While we have the deepest distrust for the power industry and their claims of safe nuclear reactors under capitalism, we oppose the crusade against nuclear energy as such.

The U.S. is the only country to have used atomic bombs (incinerating Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, when Japan was already effectively defeated) and now rains down death and destruction on Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Nonetheless the Japanese government is now working to portray the U.S. military—which has hypocritically called its military mobilization Operation *Tomodachi* (friend)—in a humanitarian light. For the Japanese rulers, the point is to strengthen the U.S.-Japan military alliance, which is first and foremost an

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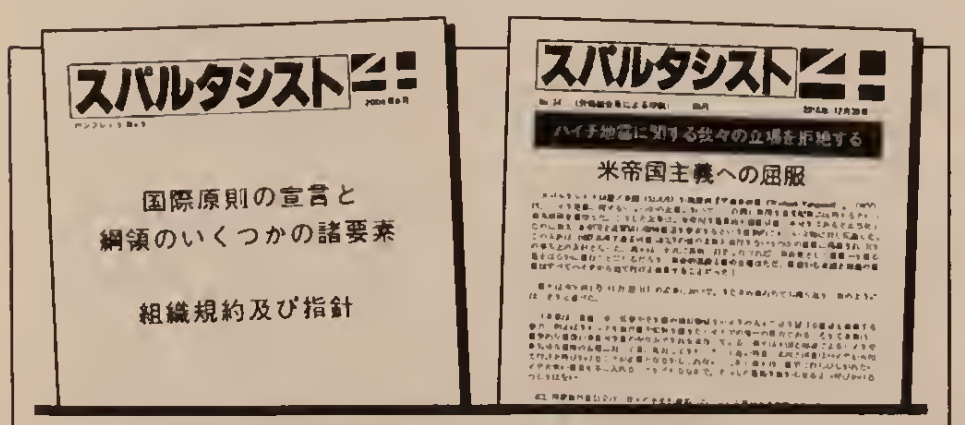


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# Japan...

*(continued from page 9)*

anti-Communist alliance, initially directed against the Soviet degenerated workers state and today targeting China and North Korea. With just under 50,000 U.S. forces dispersed among 85 military facilities throughout the Japanese archipelago, the alliance is also aimed at suppressing struggles by the militant working class throughout Asia.

Always seeking to overcome pacifist sentiments in the population—a continuing legacy of Japan's defeat in World War II—as well as more recent dissatisfaction with the presence of U.S. troops in Okinawa and elsewhere, the Japanese bourgeoisie welcomes the "mutual aid operation" with the U.S. during the present crisis. Defense Minister Kitazawa crowed that "the Japan-U.S. security treaty will be further strengthened" (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 4 April). We say: ***The SDF troops deployed in northern Japan should get out!*** We call for smashing the counter-revolutionary alliance between U.S. and Japanese imperialism through workers revolution on both sides of the Pacific.

### They Want to Make the Workers Pay

Already holding the world's largest public debt—double the size of its 425 trillion yen economy—Japan faces initial reconstruction costs estimated at some 4 trillion yen. With most roads, railways and ports in the affected area destroyed and three weeks of rolling blackouts throughout the eastern part of the country, Japanese industry is taking a pounding which has had ripple effects internationally.

The Tohoku region produced 8 percent of the country's GDP. It was home not just to farmlands and canneries but also to parts factories for giant companies like Toyota and Sony, as well as small and mid-sized firms supplying components to companies as far-flung as Boeing, GM and Peugeot Citroën. Those companies are now scrambling for parts after introducing the much-vaunted Japanese just-in-time inventory system. Global auto production was projected to be reduced by 600,000 vehicles by the end of last month. Mine and mineral processing plants, such as those producing 33 percent of the world's supply of iodine and 10 percent of the world's titanium, have been heavily damaged. South Korea and Taiwan are now salivating at the prospect of chipping away at Japan's share of the world's semiconductor and electronic component markets. Ports from Rotterdam to Asia expect delayed shipments and lighter loads for the next period.

Within four days of the quake, the Bank of Japan poured 23 trillion yen into the banking system to shore up the crashing stock market. The *zenekon*—large construction companies with close ties to government ministries—are already looking to reap huge profits from rebuilding. The bourgeoisie is determined that the costs associated with reconstruction will come out of the hides of the working class. Many workers have lost their jobs or are temporarily laid off and are battling for compensation. The government and the powerful Keidanren business federation are threatening tax hikes and cuts in subsidies for poor families; these schemes were already in the works before the disaster. Now there are plans to enact special legislation that would allow the national government to buy up land abandoned by tsunami victims with "speedy lump-sum payments before exact compensation amounts are calculated."

The displaced masses must he provided with jobs—union jobs at union wages and benefits—and housing, clothing and all other necessities. What is needed is a massive program of public works projects to rebuild housing, public facilities, factories and infrastructure. Workers committees should be established to guard against shoddy designs and other unsafe and cost-cutting measures that endanger lives. These demands—clearly necessary now—are examples of the kind of transitional demands formulated by Leon Trotsky in the 1938 Transitional Program, founding document of the Fourth International. Their purpose is to lead the workers from their present consciousness to an understanding of the need to finish with the capitalist system once and for all.

Japan Peace Museum

**Hiroshima following U.S. A-bomb blast of August 1945.**

Zenroren

**March 31: Vice chairman of Zenroren union federation, which is supported by Japanese Communist Party, hands two million yen collected to aid disaster victims over to government official in Iwate Prefecture.**

We call for the *expropriation of the utilities companies without compensation under a workers government*. In contrast, some reformist groups push demands for nationalization under capitalism. A glance back at history is instructive. In Japan, the power industry was placed under direct government control in the late 1930s, precisely as part of the mobilization for the upcoming interimperialist conflict, World War II. Against bitter opposition from the bourgeois owners of this industry, the government, representing the larger interests of the capitalist class, pushed the measure through along with the law for "general mobilization for the war effort." The industry's present structure was established after the war.

Under other circumstances, struggling capitalist industries may be nationalized because they are deemed necessary for the functioning of the system as a whole or in order that they can be upgraded at public expense to become more modern and profitable. In Britain after World War II, when a number of bankrupt companies were handsomely compensated while the workers got low wages, and high taxes. While we oppose privatization schemes, which are always accompanied by attacks on unions, wages and conditions, the social-democratic program of capitalist nationalizations has nothing in common with the fight to take the means of production away from the capitalist class through socialist revolution.

Today, the response from the unions underlines the contradictions within those workers organizations. There has been an overwhelming outpouring of solidarity with the victims of the disaster at the base of the unions, often with an impulse for taking some independent action. Many unions have been collecting funds to help their members and some have organized their own transportation to deliver aid directly. At the same time, the political program of the top leadership of the three trade-union federations—Rengo, Zenrokyo and Zenroren—is to sacrifice workers' interests for the sake of "national unity" with the bourgeoisie.

In this vein, a number of unions have announced the postponement or cancellation of the yearly *shunto* wage contract negotiations. While workers at Fukushima are endangering their own lives to try to bring the nuclear plant under control, their union leadership has cravenly renounced any demands for higher wages or better and safer working conditions (*Asahi Shimbun*, 31 March). The port workers union Zenkowan canceled a strike in March, joining the "national unity" campaign.

While reformist groups regularly denounce the right-wing leadership of Rengo, which in the main politically supports the capitalist Democratic Party, they are silent about the class collaborationism of the leaderships of Zenrokyo (tied to the Social Democratic Party) and Zenroren (tied to the JCP). The appeal by Zenroren for contributions was heeded by many workers around the country and internationally. Outrageously, the union leadership turned this money over to the local capitalist governments of Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima prefectures—in other words, to those who for years have covered up safety violations at TEPCO. Indeed Zenroren's appeal began by expressing its "respect" for the government which was supposedly working "day and night" to cope with the disaster!

It is urgently necessary to mobilize the working class ***independently*** of the bourgeoisie and its state, not least to speedily organize massive mobilization of aid and its distribution. But the union misleaders, who accept the framework of the capitalist system, oppose this perspective. There is no shared national interest between the workers and the oppressed on the one hand and the capitalist class and its government on the other. Workers of the world, unite! The death and destruction and the hardships that Japanese working people are now undergoing in the aftermath of the disaster starkly illustrate the need for the proletariat to take state power away from the bourgeoisie, on a worldwide scale. For the construction of a revolutionary workers party! For a workers republic in Japan, part of a socialist Asia!■

U.S. Navy

**U.S. and Japanese warships conduct anti-submarine drill in Pacific, December 2007.**


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# Troy Davis...

*(continued from page 12)*

executed in 1999—the U.S. is still one of the world's leaders in capital punishment.

The death row speedup launched in the mid 1980s was accompanied by a vast expansion of repressive laws and police powers, fueled in large part by the racist "war on drugs." Untold numbers of black youth were tried, convicted and sentenced as adults. Mandatory sentencing did away with parole. The later adoption of "three strikes" laws meant that one could get life imprisonment for stealing a tape deck out of a parked car.

On top of all this, a plethora of state laws limited the right to present new evidence on appeal in capital cases, while the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1996 greatly restricted the right to challenge state convictions through federal *habeas corpus*. Earlier this month, when the Supreme Court reinstated the California death sentence of Scott Pinholster, which had been overturned on new evidence presented in his federal court appeals, Clarence Thomas baldly stated that although state prisoners may sometimes submit new evidence in federal court, federal law "is designed to strongly discourage them from doing so."

WV Photo

**Protest outside Philadelphia court hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal, 9 November 2010.**

Among those whom Clinton's laws help keep trapped on death row is political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, a supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE group and an award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up on false charges of killing Police Officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981 and sentenced to death based on his political views. Court after court has refused to consider the mountain of evidence of Mumia's innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, killed Faulkner (see the Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!*). For the poor, for fighters against racial oppression, for labor militants, there is no justice in the capitalist courts.

As Marxists, we stand for the abolition of the death penalty on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent—and everywhere. We do not accord the state the right to determine who lives and who dies. The lynching of American black men—by racist mobs and by the august courts—is deeply embedded in this country's history, particularly but by no means exclusively in Southern states like Troy Davis's Georgia. In the U.S., capital punishment is the lynch rope made legal, with black people making up over 40 percent of the death row population.

The death penalty stands at the apex of the machinery of repression wielded by the capitalist rulers to contain the potentially explosive contradictions between the handful of filthy rich at the top and the many at the bottom. To put a final halt to the grisly workings of the U.S. rulers' machinery of death—from the judicial guardians of death row to the cops who operate as judge, jury and executioner in gunning down minority youth on the streets—requires sweeping away the racist capitalist system through proletarian socialist revolution.■

# Jena...

*(continued from page 12)*

Franklin presented his targets with the "options" to stop dealing or using drugs, move out of town or spend the rest of their lives in prison ("option three"). This case is starkly reminiscent of what happened in the town of Tulia, Texas, in 1999, when a full 10 percent of the black population was rounded up on the basis of a police informer and jailed on drug charges, only to be released four years later after the whole operation was exposed as a grotesque frame-up (see "Tulia Victims Freed, Finally," *WV* No. 813, 7 November 2003). Entire generations of blacks and Latinos have been criminalized through the racist "war on drugs," which was championed early on by such black Democrats as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. This underscores the urgent need to fight to ***decriminalize drugs***, as well as all other "crimes without victims," such as gambling, prostitution and pornography. Free Catrina Wallace and all victims of "Operation Option Three"!

What happened in Jena and Tulia speaks to how little has changed in the conditions of life for most black people, North and South, since civil rights and voting rights legislation was passed in the mid 1960s, when struggles for black rights rocked the country. Jena, for example, was a stronghold for "former" Klansman David Duke when he ran for governor in 1991. As we wrote in "From Slavery to Mass Incarceration—Black Liberation and the Fight for a Socialist America" (*WV* No. 955, 26 March 2010): "From slavery to convict labor, from the chain gang to the assembly line, American capitalism has been built upon the lash-scarred backs of black labor. Any organization that claims a revolutionary perspective for the United States must confront the *special oppression* of black people—their forced segregation at the bottom of capitalist society and the poisonous racism that divides the working class and cripples its struggles."

Flaherty/Rag Blog

**Catrina Wallace (right) with her mother, Caseptla Bailey. Wallace was framed up on drug charges after helping lead campaign to support the Jena Six.**

The Jena case began in September 2006 when a black student requested and received permission from a school official to sit under the so-called "white tree" at his high school, which is 80 percent white. The next day, black students arrived to find three nooses hanging from the tree, leading to an impromptu protest some days later. That December, a white student found himself on the ground in a fight that ensued after he hurled the epithet "n----r" at a black youth, leading to the arrest of the six. Mychal Bell, who spent over a year in prison, wrote in "Surviving Jena Six" (*CounterPunch*, 3-5 April 2009): "The kids who put up the noose...nothing happened to them."

At the massive September 2007 protest, black Democrats Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton helped divert the mass outrage into reliance on the capitalist government. Calling for "federal intervention to protect people from Southern injustice," Sharpton appealed to the same Feds who would take part in the "Option Three" dragnet. For his part, Barack Obama, then looking toward a run at the White House, deigned only to call for "fairness" while claiming the Jena case wasn't "a matter of black and white"! Once the Democrats' hot air was spent in Jena, the town's black population was left to the very untender mercies of the local cops and prosecutors. Those who had dared stand up for their basic rights, like Catrina Wallace, paid the price.

Jackson, Sharpton and other bourgeois politicians spout the lie that racial oppression can be ameliorated through pressure on the government—the executive committee of the racist capitalist ruling class. The truth is that black oppression has been and remains embedded in the foundations of the American capitalist profit system. While fighting against all forms of racist segregation and injustice, we realize that social conditions for workers and the urban and rural poor cannot be fundamentally altered short of the overthrow of the decaying capitalist system and the construction of an egalitarian socialist society. We fight to build a revolutionary workers party, with a strong black leadership component, to lead all the exploited and oppressed in socialist revolution, the only way to get rid of the organized violence of the capitalist courts, cops and prisons.■

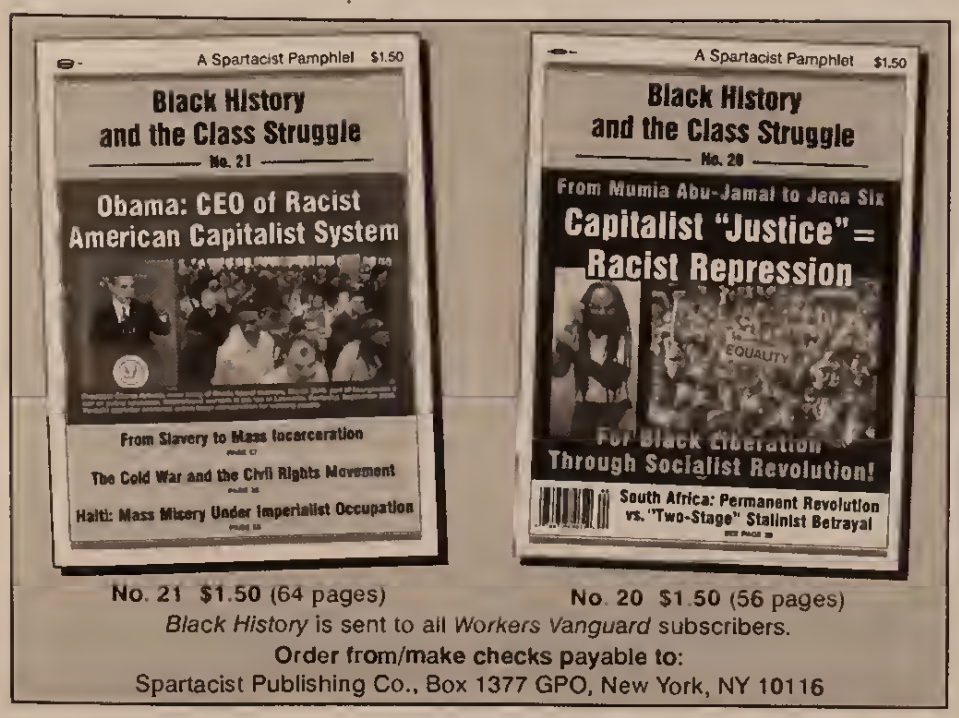
# Bay of Pigs...

*(continued from page 2)*

movements) could not bring the working class to political power. As stated in the International Communist League's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program":

> "Under the most ***favorable*** historic circumstances conceivable, the petty-bourgeois peasantry was only capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, that is, a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counterrevolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, an anti-working-class regime which blocked the possibilities to extend social revolution into Latin America and North America, and suppressed Cuba's further development in the direction of socialism. To place the working class in political power and open the road to socialist development requires a supplemental ***political*** revolution led by a Trotskyist party."

The Soviet Union, which provided Cuba with crucial military support and economic aid, is no more, destroyed in 1991-92 by capitalist counterrevolution after decades of Stalinist misrule and imperialist pressure. The Cuban economy has suffered massively in the aftermath, although not evenly and uniformly. While the predominant section of the U.S. capitalist ruling class seeks to keep a stranglehold on the island through the trade embargo, some elements seek to relax the embargo along with Cuba's diplomatic isolation from the U.S., seeing this as a more effective means of subverting the gains of the revolution. Meanwhile, Cuba remains in the imperialists' military crosshairs, a fact that its people are reminded of every day by the presence of the U.S. naval base (and detention-torture center) at Guantánamo Bay. U.S. out of Guantánamo Bay now! Our defense of the Cuban deformed workers state against the class enemy is an integral part of our program for the overthrow of bloody U.S. imperialism through proletarian revolution here, in the "belly of the beast."■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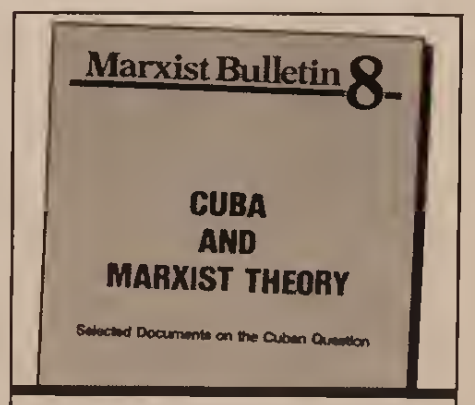


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WORKERS VANGUARD

## Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

# Supreme Court Gives Green Light to Troy Davis Execution

In a supreme act of racist contempt, on March 28 the highest court in the U.S. greased the skids for the execution of Troy Davis when it refused to consider his appeal. This latest and probably last appeal for Davis sought to reverse a Georgia federal district court ruling last August upholding his conviction and death sentence. Expressing how cheap America's capitalist rulers consider the life of a black man, the Supreme Court made no reference to the extensive evidence of Davis's innocence presented at the district court hearing, dismissing his appeal out of hand. With the stroke of a pen, another black life is to be disposed of.

Davis's sister, Martina Correia, who has campaigned around the world for her brother's exoneration, responded to the Supreme Court ruling by describing the sham evidentiary hearing held last June in Savannah: "Once the judge opened his mouth and looked at my brother with disgust I knew that no matter what Troy's lawyers had to present the judge had already made his decision to deny Troy, so he was just going through the motions like a puppeteer."

Sentenced to death in 1991 for the killing of off-duty Savannah policeman Mark MacPhail, Davis was convicted based on questionable "eyewitness" identifications, dubious accounts that Davis confessed to the killing and testimony coerced by the cops. Seven of the prosecution's nine witnesses have since recanted. The only holdouts are one man who may be the actual killer and another who initially denied being able to identify the shooter only to pin it on Davis at trial two years later. At last year's hearing, some of these witnesses were finally able to tell how they were forced by the cops to falsely implicate Davis. But the federal court decision sneered that this testimony was "smoke and mirrors" and declared the accounts of police/prosecution coercion—a regular feature of the capitalist justice system—were not credible...because the cops said it didn't happen that way! (For more on that hearing, see "Troy Davis Appeal Turned Down," *WV* No. 965, 24 September 2010.)

One day after the Supreme Court turned Davis down, the Court overturned a $14 million jury verdict awarded to black former death row inmate John Thompson against former New Orleans D.A. Harry

France 24

**Troy Davis with his sister, Martina Correia.**

Connick Sr. Thompson had spent 14 years on death row and came within weeks of execution, when his attorneys found evidence that prosecutors had concealed from the defense blood samples and eyewitness statements that exonerated him. According to the decision written by Justice Clarence Thomas, such frame-up methods did not constitute "deliberate indifference." In an op-ed column he wrote for the *New York Times* (10 April) that powerfully recounts his ordeal, Thompson remarks: "I was lucky, and got lawyers who went to extraordinary lengths. But there are more than 4,000 people serving life without parole in Louisiana, almost none of whom have lawyers after their convictions are final."

The broad exposure of so many men and women on death row proven innocent in recent years has given the ruling-class parties some pause in the accelerated rush to execution that has marked the 35 years since the death penalty was restored in 1976, following a nine-year hiatus. On March 9, Democratic Illinois governor Pat Quinn signed legislation abolishing capital punishment in the state. Illinois thus became the fifth state since 2004 to eliminate the death penalty, either through legislative action or through court decree. Yet some 3,200 people remain on death row, over half of them black and Latino. And while executions dropped last year by 12 percent to 46—less than half of those

*continued on page 11*

## State Vendetta for 2007 Protest

# Jena, Louisiana: Free All Victims of Racist Cop Roundup!

Before dawn on 9 July 2009, more than 150 cops from nine federal, state and local agencies, complete with a SWAT team and helicopters, raided the black neighborhood of Jena, a small town in rural Louisiana with barely 300 black residents. A dozen people were arrested on drug charges solely on "evidence" provided by a convicted dealer acting as a police informant. No drugs were found in the raid. But under the threat of rural Southern "justice," most of those arrested recently pleaded guilty and now face years-long prison terms. One man who was convicted of drug distribution was sentenced to 25 years' hard labor.

The racist crackdown was more than just the vicious repression that is regularly meted out to black people in urban ghettos and Southern towns in the name of the "war on drugs." For the local sheriff's office and other government authorities, it was payback for the mass protest for black rights that shook Jena in September 2007. Tens of thousands of people from across the country marched through the small town to protest on behalf of the "Jena Six"—black youths framed up on charges of second-degree attempted murder in a case redolent of the lynch law of the "Old South." The 2009 drug sweep, dubbed "Operation Option Three," was planned by Sheriff Scott Franklin in the immediate aftermath of the 2007 protest, when he was elected. One of those convicted was Catrina Wallace, a single mother of three who received wide acclaim for her role in helping organize the protests for the Jena Six, among whom was her brother, Robert Bailey.

As reported on the Huffington Post Web site (13 May 2010) by Jordan Flaherty, a co-editor of *Left Turn* who broke the story of the drug raid, cops initially claimed that they found marijuana on Wallace's kitchen table, "but later discovered that they had collected broccoli stems, left over from dinner the previous night." Nevertheless, Wallace was convicted on March 31 of three counts of distribution of a controlled substance, taken to jail after the verdict was read and hit with bail of ***one million dollars***. Her sentencing is expected to come this month.

Winter/NY Times

**20 September 2007: Tens of thousands from throughout U.S. rallied in Jena against Jim Crow prosecution of six black youth.**

As reported in *Town Talk*, a newspaper in the neighboring town of Alexandria, Franklin prepared the raid by gloatingly telling his posse: "It's going to be like Baghdad out in this community at five am.... They will get put in handcuffs, put behind bars today and never see the light of day again unless they are going out on the playground in prison." One man, Samuel Howard, had his door broken down by cops at 5:00 a.m. and was dragged out of bed naked, his house badly burned by police flares. Tasered by the cops, who also pointed guns at his three kids, Howard was brought to a baseball field, along with other people who had been rounded up, where he spent another hour without any clothes until he was given an orange jailhouse jumper.

The pretext for this racist depravity was an "anti-drug" campaign in which

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 979

29 April 2011


## Under Humanitarian Guise

# Imperialists Escalate War on Libya

AP

AFP

**Left: French aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* off coast of Libya, April 12. Right: NATO bombing near residence of Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi in suburb of Tripoli, March 29.**

APRIL 25—With the month-long aerial bombing campaign by NATO failing to topple the regime of bourgeois strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi, the imperialist powers are taking new steps to ratchet up death and destruction in Libya. In rapid succession last week, Britain, France and Italy—North Africa's former colonial rulers—dispatched military officers to Benghazi to shore up the opposition forces that have acted as the imperialists' ground troops and whip them into shape. Today Italy announced that it would join in the bombing raids. The Obama administration, which claims to have ruled out "boots on the ground" in Libya, on April 22 ordered additional firepower into the skies in the form of remotely piloted Predator drones armed with Hellfire missiles.

The murderous purpose of the imperialists' "humanitarian" mission in Libya was highlighted early today when at least two large bombs destroyed a building in central Tripoli containing a library frequented by Qaddafi and another where he had recently hosted an African Union delegation. This was the second attempt to assassinate Qaddafi by air attack in three days. Last week, missiles struck his personal compound, recalling the 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya, during which his infant daughter was killed in a similar assassination attempt.

The escalation of the war against Libya further exposes the lies spread by the imperialists and their media mouthpieces to justify the bombing campaign. Presented as a short-term action to establish a "no-fly zone" and "protect civilians"—the terms of the United Nations Security Council resolution giving cover to the terror bombing—the intervention is a drive by the imperialists to impose their diktat on this oil-rich country. From the outset, NATO was bombing Libyan government forces and, soon afterward, such Qaddafi strongholds as his hometown of Surt (Sirte). The only civilians at risk there were those near exploding NATO ordnance.

Since the Obama administration handed off control of military operations to NATO in late March, U.S. warplanes have continued to fly hundreds of sorties along with their British and French partners. With drone attacks now taking place in Misurata, the site of fierce urban fighting, greater U.S.-inflicted carnage is in the offing. In Pakistan, where the White House has leaned heavily on CIA-directed drone aircraft to launch missile attacks against Taliban fighters, more than 1,500 people, overwhelmingly civilians, have been slaughtered by Predators since August 2008. The most recent such strike on April 22 claimed 25 lives, among them at least five children.

WV Photo

**Spartacist banner at April 9 antiwar demonstration in New York City.**

Before the imperialist attack on Libya, the country was being torn apart by a low-level civil war between the Qaddafi government, which had been playing ball with the imperialists, and an imperialist-backed opposition. In the fight between these two bourgeois forces the proletariat had no side. But once the U.S.-led bombing began, the civil war became subordinated to imperialist military intervention. As we declared in "War Against Qaddafi's Libya: Imperialist Terror and Lies" (*WV* No. 977, 1 April): "In the present conflict, the workers of the world have a side: military defense of semicolonial Libya against imperialism and the opposition forces, which are acting on the imperialists' behalf."

For Marxists, military defense of Libya against the imperialists does not imply the slightest political support to Qaddafi's bloody capitalist rule. It is necessary to oppose every military occupation and attack waged by the imperialists to further their domination of the planet. Every setback they suffer weakens the class enemy of the world proletariat and assists the struggles of working people and the oppressed. It is the proletariat in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere in North Africa and the Near East that has the potential social power and class interest to lead all of the impoverished and oppressed in socialist revolution against all the murderous regimes of

*continued on page 10*

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COMMEMORATING THE WAR THAT SMASHED SLAVERY

**FINISH THE CIVIL WAR!.....6**

## Down With the "War on Drugs"!

# U.S. Spy Drones over Mexico

The bourgeois press recently let out that, with Mexico's permission, the Department of Homeland Security has been secretly flying Predator B drones across the border for the past two years—at times quite a distance into Mexican territory—to spy on Mexico's drug cartels. Starting in February, these missions have expanded deeper into Mexico, with the Predators supplemented by the Pentagon's Global Hawk drones, which fly at around 60,000 feet and scan almost 40,000 square miles. The Predators are unarmed versions of the killing machines used by the Pentagon in Pakistan, where they have killed hundreds of villagers in the name of attacking suspected "terrorists."

The *New York Times* (15 March) reported that on March 3, Mexican president Felipe Calderón and U.S. president Barack Obama agreed to continue expanding the use of spy drones and to open a second counternarcotics "fusion" center in Mexico staffed with both Mexican and American agents. Citing unnamed Mexican and U.S. officials, the *Times* added, "The American assistance has been kept secret because of legal restrictions in Mexico and the heated political sensitivities there about sovereignty." The U.S. has also been training thousands of Mexican troops and cops, upgrading Mexico's security and intelligence technology and carrying out its own eavesdropping operations in Mexico.

The pretext for all this U.S. imperialist encroachment is the *narcoviolencia* in Mexico that has left over 34,000 dead over the past four years, as Mexican drug cartels and their police adjuncts battle over control of the lucrative trade (see "Mexico: Down With 'Drug Wars' Militarization!" *WV* No. 953, 26 February 2010). As with the "war on terrorism," the "war on drugs" is wielded globally by Democrats and Republicans alike to extend U.S. imperialism's bloody reach and to bolster the repressive forces of its dependent semicolonial regimes, especially those in its Latin American "backyard." A Honduran newspaper recently announced that Washington is planning to open a new military base in Honduras, near the border with Nicaragua, to "fight drug trafficking," while Texas Congressman Michael McCaul is pushing legislation that would designate seven Mexican drug cartels as "foreign terrorist organizations."

For Latin America as a whole, none of this is new. In 1989, George H.W. Bush sent over 20,000 U.S. troops to invade Panama, where they killed hundreds and arrested President Manuel Noriega on charges of running drugs. Through Plan Colombia, launched by Bill Clinton in 2000, billions of dollars have been funneled to the blood-drenched Colombian government, whose murderous campaign against leftist guerrillas has long been wrapped in the "anti-drugs" banner. Washington crows that, through Plan Colombia, that regime has been able to establish a police presence in each of the country's 1,099 municipalities for the first time ever. Colombia has become the most dangerous country for trade unionists in the world, with 51 murdered last year alone, and is second only to the Sudan in the number of internal refugees.

In Mexico, the "war on drugs" has similarly meant an increase in state repression and the terrorization of workers and the poor, as seen by the massive military presence on urban streets. The U.S. has boosted its military aid to Mexico seven times over with the $1.4 billion "Plan Mérida," initiated in 2007 by George W. Bush and extended by Obama last year. The program provides for the purchase of aircraft, surveillance software and other services provided by U.S. defense contractors. It has also allowed the Mexican state to modernize its police forces and expand maritime interdiction capabilities. Mexico now has Latin America's third-largest military—one built for domestic, not foreign, deployment.

North of the border, the anti-drug witchhunt has meant a sharp buildup of local police forces, increasingly armed with high-tech weaponry and facing ever fewer legal restraints, and the mass incarceration of black people as well as of rising numbers of Latinos and immigrants. The *narcoviolencia* in Mexico has also become a rallying cry of the Republican Party for further clamping down on the border. The Democratic Obama White House has already surpassed the second Bush administration in deporting immigrants, with nearly 800,000 expelled in the past two years. As we pointed out in our article on the Mexican drug wars, the imposition of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) massively deepened the impoverishment of the Mexican countryside, driving the desperately poor either north of the border or into the drug trade in order to survive.

The Spartacist League/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México, sections of the International Communist League, oppose the military buildup and call for the decriminalization of drugs. By removing the super-profits from the illegal drug trade, decriminalization would also reduce the crime and other pathology that come with it. But such a simple, democratic measure is anathema to the U.S. rulers, for whom laws against drug use and other "crimes without victims," such as prostitution, gambling and pornography, at bottom serve to maintain social order on behalf of the capitalist rulers. In the U.S., it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to promote proletarian internationalism by opposing all American military aid to Mexico and Colombia and fighting for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. ***Down with Plan Mérida! Down with Plan Colombia!*** ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

### Capitalism and "Freedom of the Press"

*As explained by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin in a document presented at the founding congress of the Communist International, the mass media in capitalist "democracies" serve as an auxiliary to bourgeois class rule. This is seen, for example, in the retailing of the Qaddafi regime's supposed mass slaughter of civilians to justify the imperialist attack on Libya and in the propaganda barrage against teachers and others in the drive against public workers unions.*

"Freedom of the press" is another of the principal slogans of "pure democracy." And here, too, the workers know—and socialists everywhere have admitted it millions of times—that this freedom is a deception while the best printing-presses and the biggest stocks of paper are appropriated by the capitalists, and while capitalist rule over the press remains, a rule that is manifested throughout the world all the more strikingly, sharply and cynically the more democracy and the republican system are developed, as in America for example. The first thing to do to win real equality and genuine democracy for the working people, for the workers and peasants, is to deprive capital of the possibility of hiring writers, buying up publishing houses and bribing newspapers. And to do that the capitalists and exploiters have to be overthrown and their resistance suppressed. The capitalists have always used the term "freedom" to mean freedom for the rich to get richer and for the workers to starve to death. In capitalist usage, freedom of the press means freedom of the rich to bribe the press, freedom to use their wealth to shape and fabricate so-called public opinion. In this respect, too, the defenders of "pure democracy" prove to be defenders of an utterly foul and venal system that gives the rich control over the mass media. They prove to be deceivers of the people, who, with the aid of plausible, fine-sounding, but thoroughly false phrases, divert them from the concrete historical task of liberating the press from capitalist enslavement. Genuine freedom and equality will be embodied in the system which the Communists are building, and in which there will be no opportunity for amassing wealth at the expense of others, no objective opportunities for putting the press under the direct or indirect power of money, and no impediments in the way of any workingman (or groups of workingmen, in any numbers) for enjoying and practising equal rights in the use of public printing-presses and public stocks of paper.

—V.I. Lenin, "Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (March 1919)


**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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**No. 979** **29 April 2011**


## Letter

# On the Libyan Opposition

21 March

To the editor:

Apropos of the Libyan civil war, you declare in the latest issue of *Workers Vanguard* that "Marxists presently have no side in this conflict." This is absurd. The civil war began with a mass civil uprising that the Qaddafi regime brutally crushed in Tripoli and then moved to extirpate in other cities as well. Are you neutral when unarmed protesters are shot down in the streets? Do you take no side when the most elementary democratic rights are violated? In your statement on the US, UK, and French intervention, you refer to the Benghazi opposition as a "cabal of pro-imperialist 'democrats,' CIA stooges, monarchists, and Islamists." What about the thousands of ordinary workers fighting for their lives against the nationalist regime? Are they less worthy of support than the Egyptian, Yemeni, or Bahraini masses? This is a travesty of Marxism. You people have really lost your way.

Daniel Lazare

***WV* replies:**

What began as an uprising against the bonapartist bourgeois regime of Muammar el-Qaddafi quickly turned into a civil war between the Tripoli-centered government and an imperialist-backed opposition in the eastern areas, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions. For Marxists, the question of extending military support in civil wars and other conflicts is determined by whether the victory of one side or the other would further the cause of the working class and the oppressed. As we explained at the time in "Imperialists Hands Off Libya!" (*WV* No. 976, 18 March), from this class standpoint neither the Qaddafi regime nor the Benghazi-based opposition—a motley crew of former officials of the Qaddafi regime, monarchists, Islamists and tribal leaders who early on appealed for imperialist intervention—merited support. But, as the article noted, the world proletariat would have a side in opposing any intervention into Libya by the imperialists.

Indeed, immediately after NATO forces began their attack on Libya, the International Communist League declared in a March 20 statement: "The civil war in Libya has now been subordinated to the fight of a neocolonial country against imperialism" ("Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack," *WV* No. 977, 1 April). In this war, it is the duty of Marxists to stand for the military defense of Libya against imperialism and the opposition forces that are acting as the imperialists' ground troops, while not giving Qaddafi an ounce of political support. Daniel Lazare, who writes for the *Nation* and other publications, does not say where he stands on the imperialist war against Libya.

The ICL statement continued: "Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step toward their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression." We also note that militant opposition to imperialist intervention is a prerequisite for the working class in Egypt, Tunisia and throughout North Africa and the Near East to emerge as a revolutionary force under its own class banner. ■

# France: Down With Racist Anti-Veil Law!

AP

**April 11: Woman wearing full Islamic veil is arrested in Paris on first day racist law went into effect.**

PARIS, April 18—In a blatant display of contempt for anyone deemed insufficiently "assimilated" into (white, Catholic) French society, a new law makes it illegal for women to appear in any public area while wearing the full Muslim veil—*burqa* or *niqab*. With this law, the French capitalist ruling class is fraudulently trying to pass itself off as the great liberator and protector of Muslim women. But this law is no blow against women's oppression; it is an anti-democratic outrage that sets up fully veiled women for harassment, arrest and worse. In barring them from appearing in public, it amounts to a state-enforced French version of *purdah* (seclusion in the home).

Careful not to mention the Islamic covering by name, the new law simply states that "no one shall, in any public space, wear clothing designed to conceal the face." But the law is commonly known for what it is: the anti-*burqa* law. So far, in the week since it went into effect on April 11, four women in the Paris region have been fined.

The vote on the law took place last fall with virtually no dissent. With the government of Nicolas Sarkozy gearing up for massive attacks on workers' pensions, the racist campaign against the veil clearly served to divide and weaken the multiethnic working class. And by voting for or abstaining on the bill, the reformist workers parties—the Socialist Party, Communist Party and Left Party—demonstrated that they would not stand in Sarkozy's way.

As the Ligue Trotskyste, French section of the International Communist League, observed in *Le Bolchévik* No. 192 (June 2010), "The French reformists snap to attention when 'secularism' is invoked, even when it's by the government in its racist campaigns against the population with a Muslim background." The article noted that the left capitulated to the government's 2003 campaign against the veil, which was launched in order to head off renewed struggle in defense of pensions for teachers, for whom "secularism" is a sacred principle. The state persecution of Muslim women—among the most oppressed in society—is poison to workers struggles and must be *combated* by the workers movement.

The Sarkozy government has launched a massive propaganda offensive against the tiny number of women in France—estimated at just 2,000—who wear the full-face veil. Some 100,000 posters and 400,000 flyers were printed for distribution at government offices and schools, as well as airports and other entry points into the country. A new Web site, "Uncovered Face," was launched and government circulars explained in painstaking detail the need to "solemnly reaffirm the values of the Republic and the requirements of living together." Public sector workers, for example, are told not to serve fully veiled women and to demand that they either unveil or depart the premises. Police are to be called if the women prove recalcitrant.

As to what is considered "facial concealment," bandages and motorcycle riders' helmets are okay but, along with *burqas* and *niqabs*, hoods, masks and pretty much any other attire that prevents the face from being easily seen are *verboten*. To be sure, this law is not going to be used to go after bundled-up skiers in the French Alps, street-corner Santas or those attending costume balls. It is aimed first and foremost at Muslim women, but also at their husbands, brothers and sons, who are implicitly portrayed as woman-hating bigots. While women face fines of up to 150 euros [$220] and may be forced to attend "citizenship" classes, those who are said to "force" another to conceal her face can be threatened with huge fines of between 30,000 and 60,000 euros.

Moreover, in banning hoods, this law gives a green light and legal cover for further police harassment and attacks on young men in the suburban ghettos (*banlieues*) for whom the hooded sweatshirt is standard dress. Even wearing a mask on a political demonstration—like those with Sarkozy's face, which is quite common these days—could well expose activists to more police repression.

As fighters for the liberation of women, we Marxists oppose the veil—be it a full *niqab* or merely a headscarf—as a symbol and instrument of women's oppression. We stand in solidarity with those women who fight to escape the tyranny of this oppressive "tradition" and all other forms of reactionary religious traditionalism, from the bride price and arranged marriage to female genital mutilation. But the French government's ban on the *niqab* and *burqa* in public places, like its earlier ban on the headscarf or *hijab* in the schools, has nothing to do with sexual equality or integrating Muslim women into society. In France and elsewhere in Europe, the oppressed Muslim minority suffers the daily humiliations of racism, segregation and police violence. The numerous and varied laws targeting Muslim women are an expression of this. We unambiguously oppose these racist and discriminatory laws, which have, for example, seen Muslim girls and women expelled from schools and driven from workplaces, further isolating them from society and deepening their oppression.

With breathtaking arrogance, the Sarkozy government portrays itself as the best defender of secularism and the separation of church or mosque and state. The principle of secularism, as it arose during the French Revolution, came out of the fight to rip the emerging bourgeois society from the stranglehold of the Catholic church. Today's racist crusade against Muslim women has absolutely nothing to do with the separation of church and state, which Marxists uphold. The fact is that the French state is a far cry from secular: one-fifth of all primary and secondary education, which is financed by the state, has traditionally fallen under the control of the Catholic priests. In upholding the genuine separation of church or mosque and state, we oppose such state subsidies for churches, mosques, etc. and all state funding of religious schools, as well as religious instruction in the public schools.

In its opposition to women wearing the veil, the reformists of Lutte Ouvrière (LO) imbibe the "values" of the French rulers, waving the banner of bourgeois "secularism." Indeed, LO was in the forefront of the 2003 campaign against two high school girls, Alma and Lila Lévy, who were expelled from their school in a Paris suburb for wearing the headscarf. These expulsions paved the way for right-wing president Jacques Chirac's 2004 law banning young women in headscarves from the high schools, a law that LO welcomed.

More recently, LO was quick to laud the commission—initiated by Communist Party deputy André Gérin—that proposed the new anti-veil bill. LO opined that "it doesn't seem to be an extraordinary measure to ask someone to enter public buildings with their face exposed. Even banks oblige their clients to do that!" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 30 January 2010). A few months later, *Lutte Ouvrière* (9 July 2010) complained about the "hypocrisy" of the government because of its "policy of concessions to 'law-and-order' and anti-Muslim prejudice" even as it repeated LO's support to the law against the headscarf in schools. Speaking of "law and order," LO was elected on Gérin's slate in 2008, constituting the majority of the Vénissieux municipal council near Lyons, where it has regularly voted for the municipal budget, including funds for the municipal police!

As for the reformist New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA), while it opposed the new anti-veil law, one of its prominent national leaders, Pierre-François Grond, is a teacher who was a leader of the reactionary campaign to kick Alma and Lila Lévy out of school. Meanwhile, in the 2010 regional elections, the NPA fielded a woman wearing a headscarf on one of its electoral lists, flying in the face of the obligation for Marxists to combat religious backwardness. These consummate opportunists, who will tail anything, are presently locked in a rip-roaring fight over whether they should capitulate to bourgeois "republican secularism" or to religion. So far they're doing both.

The anti-veil law is part of a larger ruling-class offensive against immigrants and their descendents, Muslims in particular, who face daily police harassment, threats of being stripped of their French citizenship and deportation. Last fall, Roma (Gypsies) were tossed on airplanes and deported to Romania. More recently, the French and Italian governments have been engaged in a racist contest over who can best keep Tunisian immigrants out of their country. The "anti-terror" and anti-Muslim hysteria launched by the government and aided by its left "opposition" fuels racist reaction and emboldens the likes of the fascist National Front. A deadly danger to the multiracial working class, the National Front significantly increased its percentage of votes in recent county assembly elections. Struggling for class unity, workers must oppose all the racist laws targeting immigrants and fight for full citizenship rights for all.

The capitalist rulers would have us believe that a tiny, vulnerable Muslim minority represents the main threat to the rights of women. In fact, it is the rule of the bourgeoisie which upholds the reactionary institution of the family, the central force that oppresses women the world over. The family is the vehicle for transmitting property from one generation to the next and the mechanism for raising new generations of workers. Bourgeois family law is thus tightly bound up with defense of private property, and women's inequality is always reflected in the legal and social codes of every capitalist society. Reactionary ideology and religious obscurantism can never be combated by reactionary bourgeois laws. Women's oppression originates in class society and can only be eradicated through the destruction of capitalist rule, laying the basis for replacing the functions of the family with socialized childcare and housework in an egalitarian socialist society.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party that will fight in the interests of all workers and thus against racist terror and the oppression of women. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■


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## Lucy Parsons on the Origins of May Day

# "The Haymarket Martyrs"

### 1926 Article from *Labor Defender*

What is celebrated internationally on May 1 as a workers' holiday was born in the raw class struggle of labor against capital, originating 125 years ago in Chicago with the fight for an eight-hour day and the 4 May 1886 police riot against workers protesting in Haymarket Square. Anarchist labor organizers were framed up on conspiracy charges, and four were executed the following year; a fifth killed himself in jail just before the scheduled execution. The article reprinted below was written four decades later by Lucy Parsons, the wife and comrade of Albert Parsons, who was one of those hanged by the State of Illinois in November 1887. The article appeared in the November 1926 issue of *Labor Defender*, journal of the International Labor Defense, a class-struggle defense organization associated with the American Communist Party. In the article, "Bradstreet" refers to a financial publication of the time.

* * *

Does this rising generation know that those who inaugurated the eight-hour day were put to death at the command of capital?

Lucy Parsons Project

**Lucy Parsons**

Until forty years ago men, women, and children toiled ten and often twelve hours a day in factories for a mere pittance and children from eight to nine years of age had to work to help to keep up the family.

The Knights of Labor, a powerful organization, claiming 500,000 members, had never agitated for a reduction of the hours of labor. Then who were the pioneers of the eight-hour movement?

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

**Depiction of Haymarket martyrs being led to their execution in Chicago, November 1887.**

Those martyrs who were strung from the gallows in Chicago on November 11, 1887, the much lied about and abused Anarchists.

I will verify this statement. Until 1885 there had never been a concerted action for the reduction of the hours of labor. If eight hours was mentioned in some of our meetings (they were never really mentioned), why, that was only a dream to be indulged in by fools; the bosses would never tolerate such a thing, was the reply.

In 1885 a convention was held in Chicago, composed largely of delegates from Canada. They passed a resolution calling upon the workers of this country and Canada to unite in a demand for a reduction of the hours of daily toil to eight a day on the first of May, 1886, and to strike wherever it was refused. Albert R. Parsons brought the matter up before the Trade and Labor Assembly of Chicago, the first central body ever organized in this city, a body which he himself organized and of which he was elected president three consecutive times. The matter was hotly debated and finally rejected on the ground that the bosses would never tolerate it.

The Central Labor Union, composed of German mechanics, took the matter up and endorsed it. At the same time they passed a resolution requesting August Spies, editor of the Chicago *Arbeiterzeitung*, the daily German paper, and Albert R. Parsons, editor of the *Alarm*, to support it in their papers and speeches; they were both splendid orators.

Thus it was that the eight-hour movement got under way. Many other cities agitated for it, but Chicago was the storm center of the movement owing to the zeal and courage of the men and women of this city who worked day and night for it. The result was that when May 1, 1886, arrived, it found Chicago well organized and demanding the eight-hour day, striking by the thousands where the demand was refused. It was a veritable holiday for the workers.

The bosses were taken completely by surprise. Some were frightened and threatening; some were signing up; others were abusing those "scoundrels" who had brought all this trouble upon "our" city and declaring that they would be made examples of, that they ought to be hung and the like.

Bradstreet declared (see Bradstreet of that date) that stocks had slumped on the New York market owing to the strike situation in Chicago.

The police were unspeakably brutal, clubbing and shooting; factory whistles blew, but few responded.

I was chairman of the Women's Organization Committee and know personally how that great strike spread. I have never seen such solidarity. I only wish I could describe it in detail, those stirring times. It would make the blood course swiftly through the veins of the rebels of today, but lack of space forbids.

In the afternoon of May 3, the McCormick Reaper Works employees were holding a meeting at the noon hour, discussing the strike and declaring for the eight-hour day—they were then working twelve hours—when wagon loads of police dashed down upon them and began clubbing and shooting without a word of warning. An afternoon paper stated there were five killed and many injured at this meeting.

August Spies who was addressing the meeting, returned to the *Arbeiterzeitung* office and issued the circular calling the Haymarket meeting for the next evening, May 4. I will allow Mayor Harrison, who was the first witness for the defense, to describe that meeting:

> "I went to the meeting for the purpose of dispersing it in case I should feel it necessary to do so for the safety of the city...there was no suggestion made by either of the speakers looking toward calling for immediate use of force or violence. I saw no weapons at all upon any person. In listening to the speeches I concluded that it was not an organization to destroy property..."

For holding that peaceable protest meeting, five of as fine young men as ever lived, all labor organizers, were condemned and judicially murdered on November 11, 1887, in Chicago, Illinois.

There was a riot at the Haymarket meeting, it is true, but it was a police riot. Mayor Harrison further testified that, when the meeting was about to adjourn, he went to the police station, half a block distant, and ordered Captain Bondfield to send the reserves to the other stations, as the meeting was about to adjourn and was quiet. Instead of Bondfield obeying the orders of the Mayor, as soon as the Mayor started home, Bondfield rushed a company of police at double quick, with drawn clubs, upon the meeting of peaceably assembled men, women and children. At the onrush of these violators of the people's constitutional rights someone hurled a bomb. Who threw that bomb has never become known. Neither the police nor the capitalists wanted to know; what they wanted was to get hold of the labor organizers and make "examples" of them as they said openly they would do.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

**Police gun down workers in Chicago's Haymarket Square on 4 May 1886.**

The trial, so-called, lasted sixty-one days. The jury reached their verdict in less than three hours, condemning seven men to the gallows and one to prison for fourteen years. I herewith give a few, just a few, samples of the rulings of the judge who presided at the trial in selecting the jury.

James H. Walker said he had formed an opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the defendants, which opinion he still held. Now the judge takes him in hand.

> "Do you believe that you can listen to the testimony and the charge of the court and decide upon that alone, uninfluenced and unbiased by the opinion that you now have?"
> "No, I don't."
> "That is what I asked you."
> "I said I would be handicapped."
> "Do you believe that you can fairly and impartially render a verdict in accordance with the law and the evidence in this case?"
> "I shall try to do it, sir."
> "But do you believe that you can sit here


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and fairly and impartially make up your mind from the evidence whether that evidence proves that they are guilty beyond a reasonahle doubt or not?"

"I think I could but I would feel that I was a little handicapped in my judgment. I am prejudiced, sir."

"Well, that is a sufficient qualification for a juror in this case. Of course, the more a man feels that he is handicapped the more he will guard against it."

W.B. Allen, another juror. The judge asked:

"I will ask you whether what you have formed from what you have read and heard is a slight impression or an opinion, or a conviction?"

"It is a decided conviction."

"Have you made up your mind as to whether these men are guilty or innocent?"

"Yes, sir."

"Would it be difficult to change that conviction or impression perhaps?"

"It would be hard to change my conviction."

Seven years later Governor John P. Altgeld reviewed the whole case. He, having been a judge before he was elected governor, was amply competent to review the case in a legal manner. He took the testimony and proved from it that our comrades were absolutely innocent. In his masterly State Paper, Altgeld's "Reasons" (I can only take a few extracts from it here, the document is printed in the *Life of Albert R. Parsons* in full) Governor

Novosti

**Petrograd, 1917: May Day demonstration six months before Bolshevik-led revolution that smashed capitalist rule. Banner in middle reads: "Arms for the People/Long Live the International."**

Altgeld says:

"The state has never discovered who threw the bomb which killed the policemen and the evidence does not show any connection between the defendants and the man who did throw it...and again it is shown here that the bomb was, in all probability, thrown by someone seeking revenge, that is, a course had been pursued by the authorities which would naturally cause this; that for a number of years prior to the Haymarket affair there had been labor troubles, and in several cases a number of laboring people, guilty of no offense had been shot down in cold blood by the Pinkerton's men, and none of the murderers were brought to justice...

"All facts tend to show the improbability of the theory of the prosecution that the bomb was thrown as the result of a conspiracy on the part of the defendants to commit murder; if the theory of the prosecution were correct, there would have been many more bombs thrown and the fact that only one was thrown shows that it was an act of personal revenge... The record of the case shows that the judge conducted the trial with malicious ferocity and forced eight men to be tried together who should have been tried separately."

Albert R. Parsons was not arrested immediately after the Haymarket meeting. He left Chicago and stayed with his friend, D.W. Hoan, father of the present mayor of Milwaukee, at Waukesha, Wisconsin. The day the trial began he came into court and surrendered, stating that he was innocent of bomb-throwing and only wanted a chance to prove his innocence..But he too was murdered along with the other four.

Parsons, Spies, Lingg, Fischer and Engel. Although all that is mortal of you is laid beneath that beautiful monument in Waldheim Cemetery, *you are not dead*. You are just beginning to live in the hearts of all true lovers of liberty. For now, after forty years that you are gone, thousands who were then unborn are eager to learn of your lives and heroic martyrdom, and as the years lengthen the brighter will shine your names, and the more you will come to be appreciated and loved.

Those who so foully murdered you, under the forms of law—lynch law—in a court of supposed justice, are forgotten.

Rest, comrades, rest. All the tomorrows are yours!■

## Attack on Minority Women

# Congress Bans Abortion Funds for D.C.

For weeks this spring, Republicans and Democrats competed over how deeply to cut the U.S. government budget, finally agreeing on April 8 to the largest cuts in U.S. history, a massive $38 billion in the next six months. The Republicans, with a majority in the House of Representatives, took advantage of the "budget crisis" to further the assault on abortion rights. Their key demands included reinstating the recently lifted ban against the District of Columbia using its own money to fund elective abortions through Medicaid and banning federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

While the latter has been temporarily set aside, the Obama White House okayed the ban on local D.C. funding for abortions, sacrificing black women and others who are dependent on such aid on the altar of the anti-abortion bigots. The Democrats also agreed to ax $17 million from Title X, which provides federal money for birth control and reproductive health to Planned Parenthood and other organizations nationwide.

From the time of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, the Democrats as well as the Republicans have instituted one measure after another to limit access to abortion. The new measure will redound most harshly against impoverished black women who cannot afford to pay for this simple and safe medical procedure, which we say should be freely available on demand. The one-quarter of the city's population that depends on Medicaid is overwhelmingly black and Latino. As soon as the ban took effect on April 13, Medicaid funding was immediately cut off for 28 women scheduled to receive abortions that week.

Barring the city from funding abortions from its own budget is another measure of the boundless contempt the ruling-class parties have for the mostly black residents of Washington, D.C., who have never been accorded full democratic rights. This has always been a divided city, a government center served first by slaves and later by wretchedly paid, largely black labor. While in the past couple of decades Washington's demographics have changed with an influx of whites, more than half of black adults and 31 percent of Latino adults in D.C. are jobless. Those who live in the nation's capital, otherwise known as "the D.C. plantation," are denied the right to a voting representative in Congress. Until 1964, the city's residents could not even vote for president. It was not until 1973 that the right to elect a mayor and city council was granted.

But so-called "home rule" for D.C. is a fraud, for it is Congress that really pulls the strings according to its own political agenda, especially when the city government tries to enact a budget or a law. In 1998, D.C. residents overwhelmingly voted in favor of a medical marijuana program, but Congress forbade them to implement the law. That same year, the district, which faces an HIV/AIDS rate rivaling that of African countries, tried to use local funds for needle-exchange programs. Congress stopped it. While killing abortion funding this April, Congress also ordered the D.C. City Council to reinstate a reactionary school voucher program that gives local tax dollars to private and religious schools.

For an act of civil disobedience in protest against the blatantly undemocratic abortion funding ban, Mayor Vincent Gray, six members of the D.C. Council and 34 others were arrested on April 11. Held in jail for hours without food, Gray was not released until 1:00 a.m. the following morning, and the remaining protesters were only released several hours later. The abuse of a black mayor at the hands of police is not new in D.C. For Marion Barry—a victim of a bipartisan racist vendetta—it was much worse. For years in the 1980s and early 1990s he was constantly hounded by the Feds and spent six months in federal prison.

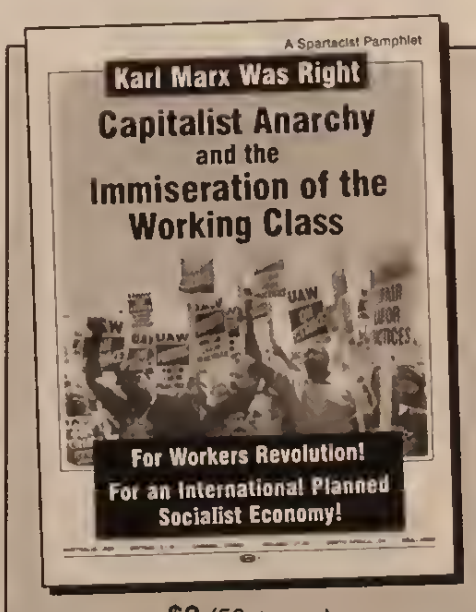
Condemning the funding ban, D.C.'s non-voting Congressional delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton declared: "These Republicans are saying, 'You don't count as American citizens. Indeed, you raise some money, hey, it's ours. We will decide how you spend your money, and we will close you down if you don't like it'." This certainly captures the Republicans' arrogance. But Norton self-servingly alibis her own party, the Democrats, who have themselves ensured that for most of the last 20 years, local funding for elective abortions has been banned in D.C. President Bill Clinton signed the ban into law *six times*, and Obama and the Democratic-controlled House and Senate upheld it in 2009. (They tempered this a bit some months later by easing restrictions on the city using its tax money for abortions while upholding the ban on federal funding.) Senate majority leader Harry Reid, who cried foul over Republicans' attacks on Planned Parenthood, has voted *ten times* for the D.C. abortion funding ban since 1995.

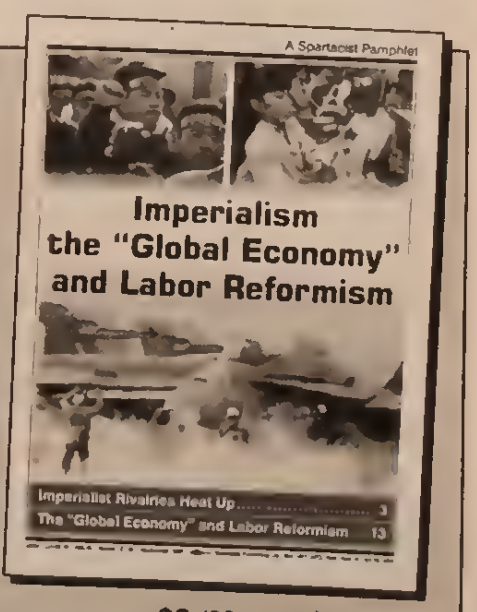
Nationwide, access to abortion is increasingly out of reach. It was the Democrats' health care "reform" that made good on Obama's promise that no federal dollars will he used to fund abortion. During the 2008 campaign, Obama declared his support for restrictions and even prohibitions on late-term abortions. Between the onslaught of government legislation and the extralegal violence of the anti-abortion terrorists, very few doctors in the U.S. today are willing to perform late-term abortions.

When running against the Republicans, who openly flaunt their racist, anti-worker, anti-woman program, the Democrats pose as defenders of black, labor and women's rights. This is a deception that serves to keep the exploited and oppressed politically chained to the capitalist system. In regard to abortion, the "pro-choice" Democrats' strategy has been to keep it safe and legal for the wealthy, but to hell with the poor and minorities. This was seen with the Hyde Amendment, signed into law by Democratic president Jimmy Carter in 1977, which eliminated Medicaid funding for abortions. Even as abortion rights continue to be axed and access is increasingly limited, pro-Democratic outfits such as the feminist National Organization for Women have limited their actions to "fight the right" electoral tactics.

Looking to the Democrats to defend women's rights is a time-tested strategy that has brought nothing but defeat. The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for free abortion on demand as part of our call for free, quality health care for all. This is the only way that legal abortion can become a reality for black, immigrant and all working-class and poor women. The anti-abortion offensive is part of a generalized assault on the living conditions of the working class. It is in the interest of the working class to mobilize in its own name—in opposition to the Democrats—to fight for access to abortion and full equality for women.

In the ban on funding abortions in Washington, D.C., the bourgeoisie's attacks on women, on minorities and on basic democratic rights come together. This underscores the need to build a revolutionary workers party that will champion the interests of all the exploited and oppressed against the outrages of this capitalist society.■



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# COMMEMORATING THE WAR THAT SMASHED SLAVERY

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

Thomas Y. Crowell Company

**Left: Victorious Union Army marches into Richmond on 3 April 1865. Right: Robert E. Lee surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House six days later.**

# FINISH THE CIVIL WAR!

*The following is a presentation given by Spartacist League speaker Diana Coleman, veteran of the Southern civil rights movement, at a forum in Oakland on March 5.*

In 1965 I went down to Gulfport, Mississippi, with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) for the second Freedom Summer. It startles me to realize that that was nearly 50 years ago—46 to be exact, but who's counting. There had been a debate in SNCC about whether to do voter registration or direct action sit-ins for integration. Well, by the summer of '65, SNCC people were sick of registering people to vote, that is, to vote Democrat in a state that was run by the racist Southern Democrats, the Dixiecrats. Stokely Carmichael, in one of his better utterances, said that it was as ludicrous

*PART ONE*

for Negroes to join the Democratic Party as it would have been for Jews to join the Nazi Party. That seemed right to me.

So we preferred sit-ins and demos. When our integrated group wasn't served at a lunch counter, we organized demos, first a small one of our project members and then bigger and bigger ones of black youth, mostly teenagers, to demonstrate in front of the store. There are some poor-quality photos of this at the literature table. Well, with the Gulfport black longshore union threatening a port shutdown, those lunch counters finally did get integrated.

Even as a New Leftist, I was impressed with the power of labor. But in the interim, we were surrounded by an ugly crowd of raving white racists waving Confederate flags. I wasn't surprised that they called us every racist name in the book. And I wasn't surprised at the vile misogyny directed toward me and the two other young white women. But I was surprised to be called a "carpetbagger." I didn't even know exactly what one was. I thought it might have something to do with the Civil War. And I figured it was probably a good thing, not a bad thing, considering the racist scum who were mouthing off.

Indeed, it was a compliment, although not intended as such. This is what the Southern planters called the Northern Radical Republicans who stayed in the South after the Civil War and who, along with black Union soldiers, made up the backbone of the Freedmen's Bureau. The term also included New England women abolitionists who came to the South to teach blacks to read. That accusation embodies as well the racist assumption that black people are happy with their lot and only get "stirred up" when white "outside agitators" come along.

This was my introduction to the fact that the contemporary black question, including the very concept of race, has its roots in the system of chattel slavery. People try to tell you that that was a long time ago. Not really. When I was in Mississippi that summer, I ran into old people whose grandparents had been born as slaves, and they told them all about it. As William Faulkner famously wrote about the South, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." The Civil War and its aftermath continue to shape this country to this day. The black population of America is no longer enslaved, but neither are they free. The Civil War was the Second American Revolution which ended chattel slavery, but it will take a third American revolution, a workers revolution, to end wage slavery, racial oppression, imperialist war and endemic poverty for blacks and all of the multiracial American working class.

As I look around at this country, Wall Street and the banks are doing great, while working people, particularly but not exclusively blacks and Latinos, lose their jobs, their houses, their health care, their pensions. There are the endless, orchestrated attacks on the unions. The homeless wander the streets. Police brutality is a fact of life in the ghettos and barrios. The U.S. is still in Iraq, still in Afghanistan, still running the Guantánamo prison camp. The U.S., with less than 5 percent of the world's population, has one-fourth of the world's prison population,

WV Photo

**April 1984: Spartacist supporter dressed in Union Army uniform tears down Confederate flag of slavery and Klan terror at San Francisco Civic Center.**

most of them black and brown. And we see Obama, the first black president, presiding over the smashing of the United Auto Workers union, an institution that actually made a concrete difference in the lives of black working people. If this is "change we can believe in," I sure don't see it. It looks like the "same-old, same-old" to me. We say: No support to either bourgeois party, Democrat or Republican!

### The Fight for Black Liberation Today

For the title of this forum, we wanted to make it clear *how* we wanted to "Finish the Civil War"—that is, by black liberation through socialist revolution. Indeed, there is another side out there that thinks that it's just halftime in the Civil War and that the South will rise again. In December there was a Secession Ball in Charleston, South Carolina. In February, there was a re-enactment of the inauguration of Jefferson Davis. Last year, the governor of Virginia declared April Confederate History Month. A Virginia textbook is trying to peddle the lie that lots of black men took up arms fighting for their slaveowners.

Beyond this outright racist garbage, it is a sign of the reactionary times we live in that the Civil War is controversial with those who consider themselves leftists. In L.A. we talked to a young woman looking to join a socialist group who told me that she couldn't really support the North in the Civil War because they were simply fighting for capitalism. *And* that blacks were better off as slaves than later as free sharecroppers, since they had higher caloric intake as slaves. Probably not true, but even if it was, so what!

A young man around the left group Spark argued that the Confederate flag was an "ambiguous symbol" expressing not only racism but also opposition to Northern aggression. Or how about Progressive Labor (PL) which, hailing "resistance" to the *revolutionary war* waged by the Union Army that smashed black chattel slavery in the South, lauds riots in New York City in 1863 that turned into an anti-black pogrom, killing at least a dozen black people and burning down black housing and an orphanage for black children. This kind of leaves you shaking your head and saying "right on" to Sherman's March to the Sea.

We have described the black population in the U.S. as an oppressed race-color caste. We noted in our seminal document "Black and Red" [printed in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9, "Basic Documents of the Spartacist League"] that "from their arrival in this country, the Negro people have been *an integral part* of American class society while at the same time *forcibly segregated* at the bottom of this society." Thus blacks face discrimination, in different degrees, regardless of social status, wealth or class position. The grotesque arrest of noted Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. showed that in living color.

But blacks are today still an integral

## BLACK LIBERATION THROUGH SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

and strategic part of the working class, despite unemployment and mass incarceration. As Leon Trotsky, leader along with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, stated, "We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class." Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses with the social power of the multiracial proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party.

From the formation of the Spartacist tendency in the early 1960s, we have stood for the perspective and program of revolutionary integrationism. This position is counterposed to both the liberal reformist response to black oppression and to all political expressions of black separatism. The liberation of black people from conditions of racial oppression and impoverishment—conditions inherent to the U.S. capitalist system—can be achieved only in an egalitarian socialist society. And such a society can be achieved only through the overthrow of the capitalist system by the working class and its allies. This talk is an exposition of those points.

## Karl Marx and the Civil War

You cannot understand the black question in the U.S. without understanding that "peculiar institution," slavery, and the bloody Civil War which ended it. And I want to deal prominently here with the role of Karl Marx in understanding these questions. There's endless garbage out there from black nationalists and academics about how "Marxism is Eurocentric," "Marx was a racist," "Marx didn't know nothing about the U.S.," etc., etc. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In their Civil War writings, one is struck by Marx and Friedrich Engels' astonishing knowledge of American history. They saw the Civil War as one of the century's major battles for emancipation, a social overturn and a harbinger of socialist revolutions to come.

I read this book called *Marx at the Margins* by Kevin B. Anderson, a follower of Raya Dunayevskaya, and found his chapter on Marx and the Civil War quite useful. He makes the point that although Marx's writings on the Civil War and slavery are quite available in the U.S., they are often disregarded and considered as "falling outside Marx's core concerns, or even his core concepts." Of course, in Volume I of *Capital*, which presumably does deal with Marx's "core concepts," Marx writes: "In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." You will find these last words on the membership cards of our Labor Black Leagues.

Comrade Jacob gave a great class called "Slavery and the Origins of American Capitalism," which was reprinted in *WV* [Nos. 942, 943 and 944; 11 September, 25 September and 9 October 2009]. I cannot recapitulate it all here, but what it demonstrated so well is that slavery, although it was certainly an outmoded social system, was key to the early development of American and British capitalism. In the 1800s, the textile mills of Britain ran on cotton from the Southern slavocracy, shipped on boats owned by Northern capitalists and leaving from Northern ports. British and American capitalists were tied to slavery by a million threads, even if they themselves didn't own slaves. Anderson's book had an interesting early quote from Marx in 1846, speaking about slavery in the American South and Brazil:

> "Direct slavery is as much the pivot upon which our present-day industrialism turns as are machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery there would be no cotton, without cotton there would be no modern industry. It is slavery which has given value to the colonies, it is the colonies which have created world trade, and world trade is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry.... Slavery is therefore an economic category of paramount importance."

And in slavery we see the beginning of the material basis for the creation of a race-color caste. As Frederick Douglass said: "We are then a persecuted people, not because we are *colored*, but simply because that color has for a series of years been coupled in the public mind with the degradation of slavery and servitude." The unscientific category of "race" and the racist myth of black inferiority were necessary props to slavery in the U.S. As Dick Fraser, a veteran Trotskyist who made a unique contribution to the Marxist understanding of the American black question, wrote, "Particularly when the world was bursting with revolutions proclaiming the equality of all men. This slave system became so repulsive in fact that only weird and perverse social relations could contain it. To despise the black skin as the mark of the slave was the principal and focal point of these social relations," ["The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution" (November 1953), reprinted in *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, "In Memoriam, Richard S. Fraser: An Appreciation and Selection of His Work" (August 1990)]. "Weird and perverse" is about right, now as then.

There's this image that Marx spent all his time sitting around in the library of the British Museum writing *Capital*. Well, it's good that he did, but he and the First International also *fought* slavery as an inseparable part of the struggle for working-class emancipation. A number of German workers came to the United States following the defeat of the 1848 bourgeois-democratic revolution. These "Red '48ers" were animated by revolutionary ideals and became involved in the anti-slavery struggle. Joseph Weydemeyer, a close collaborator of Marx's, became a Union officer at a critical juncture when the North needed leaders with military experience.

Marx and Engels also played a key role in winning English workers in the cotton industry to the cause of Northern victory. The British bourgeoisie wanted to intervene on the side of the Confederacy but was stymied by working-class opposition. These workers in England endured great privations and suffering, but they were won to an internationalist conception that they had an interest in fighting to get rid of black chattel slavery. If you are interested in more info on this topic, I recommend a talk by Don Alexander called "Karl Marx and the War Against Slavery," which was given in 1990 [printed in *WV* No. 502, 18 May 1990].

"The English working class has won immortal historical honour for itself by thwarting the repeated attempts of the ruling classes to intervene on behalf of the American slaveholders by its enthusiastic mass meetings, even though the prolongation of the American Civil War subjects a million English workers to the most fearful suffering and privations."

—Karl Marx, 1863

Beard (inset), Dietz Verlag Berlin

**Police attack workers meeting in London's Hyde Park, 1862.**

James McPherson starts off his book *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* by stating:

> "Four years after the guns fell silent at Appomattox, Harvard historian George Ticknor reflected on the meaning of the Civil War. That national trauma had riven 'a great gulf between what happened before in our century and what has happened since, or what is likely to happen hereafter. It does not seem to me as if I were living in the country in which I was born'."

Indeed, the Civil War was a social overturn that freed the slaves and opened the road to the development of the United States as a modern industrial power. Before the Civil War, the U.S. was very federated and didn't have a national currency; there was no federal income tax or IRS (I leave it to you whether this was an advance!); many areas weren't accurately mapped. Before the Civil War, the United States was a plural noun, as in "The United States are beautiful." After the Civil War, the United States became a singular noun, as in "The United States is beautiful." Or ugly, depending on whether you're referring to the scenery or today's political situation.

Writing in 1861, Marx said, "The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other" ["The Civil War in the United States"]. Criticizing Lincoln's early wavering on emancipation, Marx declared, "Events themselves drive to the promulgation of the decisive slogan—*emancipation of the slaves*."

## The Civil War: A Social Revolution

Marx was quite clear that slavery was an expansionist system that had to be stopped. Very much like Frederick Douglass, with whom there was a real convergence, Marx returned again and again to the notion that the Union needed to wage the war by revolutionary means, whether by the use of black troops or by encouraging a slave uprising. After John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, Marx wrote to Engels: "In my view, the most momentous thing happening in the world today is, on the one hand, the movement among the slaves in America, started by the death of Brown, and the movement among the slaves in Russia, on the other.... I have just seen in the *Tribune* that there was a new slave uprising in Missouri, naturally suppressed. But the signal has now been given." After Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and gave the go-ahead to the recruitment of black troops, nearly 200,000 joined up to fight for their own freedom. They spread fear in the hearts of the Confederacy as Marx had predicted, and helped turn the tide to win the war.

Let me make a point here that the American Revolution was more of a political revolution than a social revolution. It didn't overthrow an entrenched aristocratic order—it was more the question of which capitalists, British or American, would be profiting. The war of independence did not really need a radical, plebeian, terrorist phase. It didn't give rise to a living radical tradition or heroes with whom we can identify. Who would it be—Jefferson, the slave-owner?

It is in the Civil War era that there are parallels with the plebeian component of the French Revolution. The radical abolitionists—Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and John Brown—are the only figures in American history before the emergence of the workers movement with whom we can identify.

*continued on page 8*

Danny Lyon

Oxford University Press

**Above: Team led by SNCC activist Bob Moses (right) during voter registration drive in Mississippi in 1963. Left: Klansmen beat black man in Birmingham bus station during Freedom Rides, 14 May 1961.**

# Civil War...

*(continued from page 7)*

The life of Harriet Tubman illustrates in a particularly acute fashion the tremendous obstacles black women faced regarding even the elementary decencies of life. Despite her courageous work for black freedom, she lived in poverty all her life and was compelled to wage a decades-long fight for the pension her Civil War service entitled her to. Today black working women face triple oppression as blacks, women and workers.

John Brown is denounced in public schools as a dangerous extremist and a maniac. Of course, we don't share John Brown's religious outlook. But he was a committed fighter for black rights who wanted to inspire black rebellion and was willing to die trying. If that makes you crazy, then perhaps we need more crazy people. When John Brown said: "I, John Brown, am quite certain that the crimes of this land will never be purged away but with blood," he was so right. It took blood and iron and a war that cost 600,000 men, almost as many as have died in all other U.S. wars combined, to end slavery.

I want to say something about Lincoln and historical materialism. Many opponents of revolutionary Marxism, from black nationalists to reformist leftists, have made a virtual cottage industry out of the slander that "Honest Abe" was a racist or even a white-supremacist. Here's a quote from the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP): "It is a lie that 'Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves' because he was morally outraged over slavery. Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves (and not all the slaves at first, but only those in the states that had joined the southern Confederacy) because he saw that it would be impossible to win the Civil War against that southern Confederacy without freeing these slaves and allowing them to fight in the Union army" [*Revolutionary Worker*, 14 August 1989]. The RCP's conclusion: "Lincoln spoke and acted for the *bourgeoisie*—the factory-owners, railroad-owners, and other capitalists centered in the North—and he conducted the war *in their interests*."

Actually Lincoln *was* morally outraged by slavery, but the real point is that the RCP rejects Marxist materialism in favor of liberal moralizing. They deny that against the reactionary class of slaveholders and the antiquated slave system, the Northern capitalists represented a revolutionary class whose victory was in the interests of historical progress. Presenting the goals of the North and South as equally rapacious, the RCP neither sides with the North nor characterizes its victory as the consummation of a social revolution. Do they, Spark or PL even bother to think they might want to deal with Karl Marx's positions on this question? Not really; their Marxist pretensions are pretty thin.

As Marxists, we must be able to grasp that the bourgeoisie was once progressive, but now, in the epoch of imperialist decay, is no longer. Things change, that's dialectical. Of course, this is all a little rich coming from the RCP, whose calling card is back-handed support to the Democrats, through their "Drive Out the Bush Regime" campaigns. Or PL, which brags that its members worked in the Obama campaign.

Library of Congress

Dietz Verlag Berlin

**Left: Slaves pick cotton on Georgia plantation. Right: Textile looms in Britain in 1830s. British textile mills depended on cotton from American South.**

## Lincoln and Emancipation

One of the more important and controversial of Marx's writings on the Civil War is his letter to Abraham Lincoln on the occasion of his re-election in 1864. This was somewhat controversial in the First International at the time. And it still is controversial. Let me give myself as a bad example of this. One of the pictures on the forum flyer shows Ritchie Bradley cutting down the Confederate flag that hung in San Francisco Civic Center. That this symbol of slavery and the KKK was hanging in San Francisco in the 1980s really was outrageous. It had been there for years, sometimes taken down if there was a big demo but put back up. When Ritchie and I ran for SF Board of Supervisors in 1982, we had made an issue of it and said that, if elected, our first act would be to see it taken down. The issue had come up in unions like the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. But by 1984, with some pushing especially by our National Chairman, Jim Robertson, the Bay Area SL decided that the flag had to go.

White House

**March 1865: Lincoln with commanders who led military victory against Confederacy. From left: Generals William T. Sherman and U. S. Grant; Admiral David D. Porter (far right).**

This was a real project: the pole was a huge metal thing and the flag was hooked way at the top; you couldn't just stand at the bottom and pull it down. Ritchie had to practice pole-climbing with a special rope device. He and another guy dressed in workers coveralls (over a Union Army outfit) went to the pole first with a ladder. The guy got Ritchie started and then pulled away the ladder. Meanwhile, we had someone at the nearby pay phone who called the *SF Chronicle*'s press reps in City Hall and said, "Wow, there's this guy climbing the flagpole in a Union Army outfit, looking like he's gonna tear down the Confederate flag. You should come out and take a picture." So there were great photos in the bourgeois press.

The same day Ritchie first took down the Confederate flag, an all-white jury for a second time acquitted the Klan/Nazi killers of the five civil rights and labor organizers who were murdered in 1979 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Actually, Ritchie tore down two Confederate flags because "Dixie Dianne" Feinstein, then SF mayor, now Senator from California, kept putting them back up. She also had destroyed a replica of the historic Northern Fort Sumter flag that the SL kindly donated to the city and which Ritchie kindly installed. In fact, the Confederate flag only finally stayed down after anonymous militants came in the night and cut down the whole damn pole with an acetylene torch.

In the meantime, Ritchie went on trial for vandalism. But Ritchie and his lawyer, Valerie West, put Feinstein and the city administration on trial, as communists are supposed to do in this situation. Valerie tried to get the videotape of the Greensboro massacre, which prominently shows the KKK/Nazi murderers with Confederate flags, entered as evidence, but the judge thought that was "too good" and would unduly influence the jury. But there was all kinds of testimony about slavery, the KKK and the Civil War, which the jury just loved. One juror later said the trial changed his life. Most of the jury was for acquittal; it was a hung jury and the city didn't try him again because they knew they'd never get a conviction.

So to get to my point here, I was supposed to testify as a witness and go into the SL's politics. I was supposed to read Marx's letter to Lincoln, but on the stand I just balked and wouldn't read all of it. Valerie kept saying, "Isn't there something else you want to read?" and I kept saying, "No." What's a lawyer to do? Anyhow, here's what Marx wrote:

> "Sir, We congratulate the American People upon your Re-election by a large Majority.
>
> "If resistance to the Slave Power was the reserved Watchword of your first election, the triumphant Warcry of your Re-election is, Death to Slavery."

Here's the part I really didn't like and refused to read:

> "From the commencement of the Titanic American Strife, the Working men of Europe felt instinctively that the Star spangled Banner carried the Destiny of their class...."

It goes on:

> "The Working Men of Europe feel sure that as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the Middle Class, so the American Anti-Slavery War will do for the Working Classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come, that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded Son of the Working Class, to lead his Country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained Race and the Reconstruction of a Social World."

By declaring that the European workers saw "the star-spangled banner" as carrying the destiny of their class, was Marx forsaking the red flag of communism? That was my view, but it really reflected my own New Leftism and lack of historical perspective. Is "the star-spangled banner" waving over Sherman's March to the Sea, followed by ten solid miles of black people who rightly saw the Northern force as a liberating army, just the same as "the star-spangled banner" on U.S. warplanes dropping napalm on Vietnam? Is Lincoln sending an occupying army into the South the same as Obama, Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, sending an occupying army into Afghanistan? No!

The Civil War was the last of the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions, and Lincoln was bourgeois and revolutionary at the same time—with all the contradictions that this implies. As materialists, Marxists do not judge historical figures primarily based on the ideas in their heads but on how well they fulfilled the tasks of their epoch. While Lincoln had bourgeois conceptions—no surprise there!—he was uniquely qualified to carry out the task before him, and in the last analysis he rose to the occasion as no other. That is the essence of his historical greatness. We can complain that Lincoln wasn't Lenin. That's true—but there wasn't much of an organized working class in the U.S. until after the Civil War, either. Marx understood that with the demise of the slave power, the unbridled growth of capitalism would lay the foundation for the development of the American proletariat—capitalism's future gravedigger.

## The Defeat of Radical Reconstruction

Now on Radical Reconstruction. As we said in "Black and Red": "Capitalist and slave alike stood to gain from the sup-


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# RACIST TRASH: NOT *GONE WITH THE WIND* YET

In addition to being the 150th anniversary of the outbreak of the Civil War, this year also marks the 75th anniversary of the most wildly successful, poisonously syrupy and all-around trashiest justification for slavery produced in the U.S.: Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel *Gone With the Wind*. The continued popularity of such racist "entertainment" as this book and movie counters the myth, touted by President Barack Obama, that he has ushered in a "post-racial" society. Documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, countering the "smug insistence that race is no longer a factor in our society," pointed out recently that the result of the histories written in the war's aftermath "has been to blur the reality that slavery was at the heart of the matter, ignore the baser realities of the brutal fighting, romanticize our own home-grown terrorist organization, the Ku Klux Klan, and distort the consequences of the Civil War that still intrude on our national life" ("A Conflict's Acoustic Shadows," *New York Times*, 12 April).

Atlanta will host *Gone With the Wind* celebrations once again this summer, billed as "a global pilgrimage to Atlanta." On the occasion of the book's 50th anniversary, the Atlanta area saw "Tara balls" *ad nauseam*, one of which was attended by then mayor Andrew Young and his wife, the only black people present amid the plethora of Confederate army uniforms. On that occasion, we wrote "'Gone With the Wind'—50 Years of Racist Trash" (*WV* No. 407, 4 July 1986), excerpts from which are printed below.

* * *

This book and the hugely successful movie based on it sprinkle "moonlight and magnolias" on one of the most brutal slave systems the world has ever known. The life of a slave meant back-breaking work from dawn to dusk; a slave's child or spouse could be sold at any time; hunger was ever-present. The antebellum South was a totalitarian police state ever in fear of slave uprisings. This is the society Margaret Mitchell referred to as "glamorous," writing at length about the happiness of the "child-like" slave and his devotion to his master. At one point, the novel's heroine, Scarlett O'Hara, muses that "Negroes were provoking sometimes and stupid and lazy, but there was loyalty in them that money couldn't buy, a feeling of oneness with their white folks."...

*Gone With the Wind*, the novel, appeared in the mid-1930s in a period of unremittent lynch terror in the South, symbolized by the prolonged struggle to save the Scottshoro Boys from the hangman's noose—while "liberals" like Franklin D. Roosevelt and the editor of the Atlanta *Constitution* opposed the anti-lynching law in Congress. The movie came out on the eve of World War II. The heritage of slavery and police-state oppression of blacks in the Jim Crow South belied American imperialism's fraudulent claim to be fighting for "democracy" against Nazi racism. *Gone With the Wind* shined up the tarnished image of racist America and in this way furthered Washington's mobilization for war. Attacks on the struggle for black rights have always accompanied the U.S. rulers' preparations for war.

Warner Home Video

Corbis-Bettmann

**Left: Still from 1939 movie *Gone With the Wind*, which glorified slavery. Right: 1863 photo of slave scarred from whipping.**

Margaret Mitchell worshipped slave society. She grew up in a period that saw the rebirth of the Klan with the hanging of the innocent Jewish businessman Leo Frank, framed for the murder of a white girl, a period when the Klan off and on ran the Georgia state government for years. Mitchell was a reporter for the Atlanta *Constitution* in an era when Georgia was trying to crush the life out of courageous black Communist Angelo Herndon. It says a lot about Mitchell that she was ten years old by the time her family broke the news to her that the South had lost the war!

*Gone With the Wind* is not just another trashy Harlequin romance, a piece of escapist fluff. It is about as politically innocent as D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, which openly glorified the Klan. It will take a third American revolution to truly finish the Civil War, set the record straight and relegate *Gone With the Wind* to the scrap heap of history. The cultural record of human emancipation will record this debunking with great relish.■

pression of the planter aristocracy but beyond that had no further common interests. In fact it was the Negroes themselves who, within the protective framework provided hy the Reconstruction Acts and the military dictatorship of the occupying Union army, carried through the social revolution and destruction of the old planter class."

Radical Reconstruction was the most democratic and egalitarian time in American history. Public education was set up in the South. Very brave abolitionist women from New England risked death teaching blacks. These schools were flooded by blacks of all ages. It had been a crime to teach a slave to read, but even for poor whites there had not been a public school system. Blacks voted at rates as high as 90 percent and many, mostly ex-slaves, were elected to state and national office. The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments were passed, abolishing slavery, declaring that anyone born in the U.S. was a citizen and that the right to vote could not be denied on "account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Of course, women, black or white, still couldn't vote. And indeed, Mississippi did not officially ratify the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery until 1995. Luckily, they lost the war, so slavery was abolished, official consent or not, but it's certainly a statement.

These amendments were progressive measures won, as is always the case, by struggle. Initially, I had no idea how progressive the 14th Amendment was. I assumed that in all countries, if you were born there, you were a citizen. But in many countries you aren't a citizen if you aren't of the "native stock." Today, this progressive measure is under attack from the anti-immigrant bigots. For example, Republican U.S. Congressman Gary Miller, ranting against immigrant women and "anchor babies": "By granting children of illegal immigrants citizenship, the child can eventually anchor an entire family into the United States.... Consequently, the child—and potentially their family—will have access to a wide array of taxpayer-funded benefits."

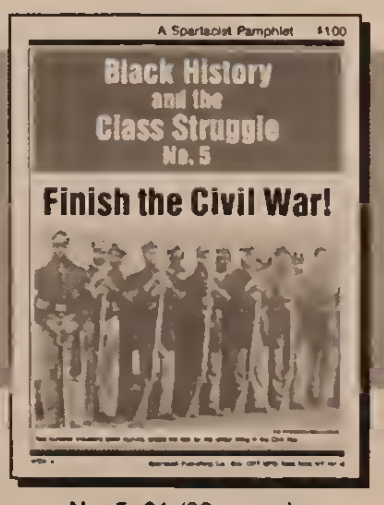
Tell me please, what is this "wide array of taxpayer-funded benefits"? We all know the undocumented workers get the worst work at the lowest pay, are afraid to collect benefits and face a higher risk of deportation under Obama than they did under Bush. These immigrants often bring experience of class struggle, experience which the U.S. working class could really use, and they provide a living link to the proletariat of other countries. The labor movement must see the struggle against anti-immigrant and anti-black racism as central to its own cause. No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Now as I said, "Capitalist and slave alike stood to gain from the suppression of the planter aristocracy, *but beyond that had no further common interests*." For Reconstruction to have succeeded would have required breaking up the large landed estates and for blacks to have gotten the "40 acres and a mule." But the promise of black freedom was betrayed when the Northern capitalists formed an alliance with the remnants of the slavocracy in order to exploit Southern resources and the freedmen. Especially after the Paris Commune of 1871, which the American bourgeoisie watched with great horror, they saw expropriation and redistribution of private property in the land as a threat. Black freedmen and poor white sharecroppers hardly had the social weight to effect this change. In the Compromise of 1877, Union troops were pulled out of the South—and sent to repress the Great Rail Strike of 1877. That tells you a whole lot right there!

Over the next 20 years emerged the postwar Southern system of sharecropping, poll taxes, chain gangs, the convict lease system and lynch law. This was codified in a series of laws institutionalizing the rigid Jim Crow segregation and police-state terror that dominated the South right up until the civil rights movement. It took a while, because blacks fought to defend the rights they had won. But there was a *political* counterrevolution, and the armed agents of it were the Ku Klux Klan. Hundreds, maybe thousands of blacks were lynched during this period. This was the so-called Redeemer period glorified by racist academics and racist movies like *Birth of a Nation*.

While blacks were not returned to slavery, the legacy of the defeat of Reconstruction is that blacks in the U.S. were consolidated anew as a specially oppressed race-color caste segregated at the bottom of this society. Segregation was the main prop of the new racist order. This was generalized throughout the country, where the harsh economic realities of black oppression were always in evidence despite the fact the segregation might be de facto, rather than the Jim Crow, back-of-the-bus kind. The segregation of blacks as an oppressed race-color caste is essential to the maintenance of American capitalism and has served U.S. imperialism very well.

[TO BE CONTINUED]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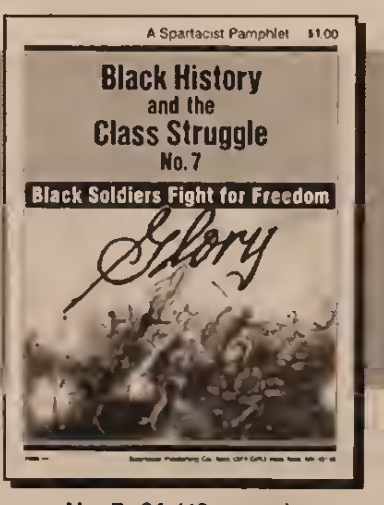


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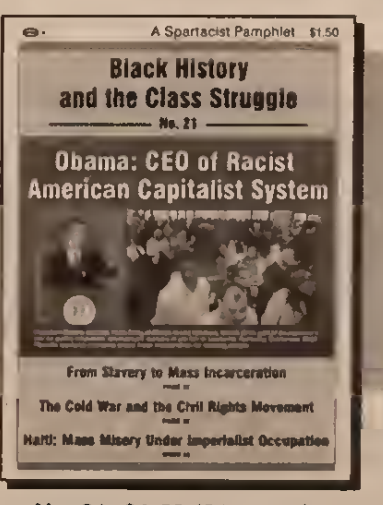


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# Libya...

*(continued from page 1)*

the region. Revolutionary workers parties must he built that will link the fight for socialist federations of North Africa and the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers.

### Imperialist Terror and Intrigue

A Libyan government spokesman denounced the latest attack on Tripoli as "an act of terrorism, an act worthy of mafia gangs not governments." The imperialist gangsters made clear early on that their intent was to oust Qaddafi one way or another. A joint letter issued on April 15 by Barack Obama, British prime minister David Cameron and French president Nicolas Sarkozy declared that any outcome short of Qaddafi's removal would be an "unconscionable betrayal." Every offer of a cease-fire from Qaddafi has been met with flat rejection. As if to hammer home this point, today's bombing attack laid waste to the building where South Africa's Jacob Zuma and two other African presidents held talks with Qaddafi earlier this month to try to work out a peace deal!

For all their overwhelming military might, the imperialist powers are between a rock and a hard place when dealing with Libya, particularly as the U.S. is mired in the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. The Libyan opposition forces are a motley crew with no unified command, and the Western powers themselves are far from united on where to take this, reflecting their divergent interests.

Germany abstained on the March UN Security Council vote and withdrew its ships from the NATO mission enforcing the arms embargo on Libya. More recently, it volunteered troops for a proposed 1,000-strong combat force approved by the European Union (EU) on April 1 whose mission, if called upon by the UN, would ostensibly be for "humanitarian assistance" for the western port city of Misurata. What the imperialists have done in Misurata—besides helping lay waste to it—is to make a show of ferrying several thousand migrant workers out of the besieged city to Benghazi. But such concern for the desperate plight of North African refugees dries up the moment they make it to the shores of Europe, where a renewed border clampdown is under way. The International Communist League says: Down with racist "Fortress Europe"! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

As Britain, France and Italy were rushing military officers to Benghazi, the *Financial Times* (22 April) reported that a senior British Ministry of Defense official dismissed the possibility of ground forces under EU command being placed in Libya. Paris, which has been flexing its military muscle in Ivory Coast and elsewhere in Africa, continues to voice support for the EU plan. In the London *Guardian* (19 April), Simon Tisdall plainly laid out the situation:

> "Britain is now publicly doing what it expressly said it would not do when the no-fly intervention began: putting boots on the ground in Libya. France is taking similar action.... Escalation is in the air—and on the ground. The EU is discussing what it says is an approved 'concept of operations' for sending European troops to Libya to protect refugees and humanitarian relief efforts. Nato strike aircraft, unsuited to killing alleyway snipers, are instead widening their target range to include Gaddafi's communication lines and his home town of Sirte. And off the record, nobody bothers to deny that British and other special forces are already operating in theatre."

The British *Independent* (20 April) described the British advisers as "a team hand-picked for their track records in their specialist fields," including "one of the most battle-hardened commanders in the British Army, with extensive experience of combat in Afghanistan." However they are dressed up, these trained killers clearly are no advance team for the Red Cross—and neither are their French or Italian counterparts. One historical example of the havoc caused by such agents is the mid 1960s civil war in Yemen, the southern part of which had a longstanding British presence. Between 1963 and 1967, a contingent of no more than 50 British mercenaries, mostly veteran officers, trained royalist forces and planned ambushes in the course of a civil war fought against Yemeni republicans backed by the Egyptian army of Gamal Abdel Nasser. In this period, over 20,000 of Nasser's troops were killed, as against 5,000 on the other side.

### Reformists Dance to Imperialists' Tune

The Libyan opposition forces never made a secret of their desire for imperialist intervention to back up their drive to oust Qaddafi. As to be expected, the capitalist media in the U.S. and elsewhere spewed pages of unsubstantiated reports of massacres of civilians by the Qaddafi regime. Qaddafi's opponents—monarchists, disaffected tribal groups, regime defectors and others (some of them recipients of CIA funding)—were portrayed as the Libyan component of the "Arab Spring." Following suit, self-styled "socialists"—from the New Anti-Capitalist Party in France and the British Socialist Workers Party to the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S.—early on became cheerleaders for the Libyan opposition.

Just two days before the imperialists began their bombing, the ISO's *Socialist Worker* (17 March) featured an article on its Web site headlined "Qaddafi's Barbaric War on the Uprising" that enthused over the Libyan "rebellion" as "by far the broadest and deepest" challenge ever to the regime. Through the looking glass, as it were, the ISO informed us that the U.S. & Co. might intervene militarily "when the uprising was winning...as an excuse to squelch dissent and confront the tide of revolution in the Arab world." To be sure, Qaddafi's bourgeois dictatorship has never shown much restraint in putting down any challenges to its rule. But *anyone* could see that in the current conflict the imperialists were backing up the motley opposition forces aiming to drive out Qaddafi. Indeed, the bombing began when it was clear they were losing. At that point, the ISO was forced to engage in some cover-up, admitting, for example, that the National Salvation Front—a component of the opposition—had long been a CIA asset.

In covering its tracks, the ISO actually provided a service by posting on its Web site a *Boston Globe* (14 April) op-ed piece by University of Texas professor Alan Kuperman, who points out that "President Barack Obama grossly exaggerated the humanitarian threat to justify military action in Libya." Kuperman notes that if Qaddafi were "indiscriminately targeting civilians, women would comprise about half the casualties," but data released by Human Rights Watch indicates that less than 3 percent of the wounded in Misurata were women. He continues: "By emboldening rebellion, US interference has prolonged Libya's civil war and the resultant suffering of innocents."

We will not hold our breath waiting for the ISO to cop to its own "exaggerations" in service to the Commander-in-Chief. As for its call "Victory to the Arab Revolutions," which the ISO emblazoned on a banner at an April 9 antiwar protest in New York City, this is but an expression of the bourgeois nationalism the ISO promotes that serves to bind the exploited and oppressed to the capitalist ruling classes of the Near East and North Africa. In Egypt, that slogan translates into ostensible socialists pandering to the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood and reinforcing deadly illusions in the military as the "friend of the people." In Libya, it means apologizing for an opposition whose wagon is directly hitched to the imperialists. At the NYC protest, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club raised a program of class struggle against the imperialists, with a banner reading: "Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attacks! Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party That Fights for Socialist Revolution!"

The Workers World Party (WWP) opposed the U.S./NATO intervention in Libya from the start. But it did so as champions of the nationalist Qaddafi dictatorship, which has long presented its brutal rule as "anti-imperialist." In the 1980s, the country was high on the imperialists' hit list mainly because it was a military client of the former Soviet Union. But the regime subsequently sought to make its peace with the U.S., as seen in its collaboration with the imperialists in their "war on terror."

In the context of the current wars, the WWP's International Action Center and the ISO have joined hands with various liberal pacifist groups in the United National Antiwar Committee (UNAC), which called the NYC protest and one the next day in the Bay Area. Calling to "bring the troops home now" from Afghanistan and Iraq, UNAC raised the timeworn appeal for money for jobs and education, not war. At an earlier NYC protest, the ANSWER coalition run by the WWP's cousins in the Party for Socialism and Liberation rendered this appeal as "Money for jobs and education—not for war and occupation."

The role of all of these reformists is to hide the reality that imperialist war is a necessary part of the same capitalist system that grinds down the working class, black people, immigrants and most everybody else at home. As Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin taught, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, marked by the concentration, domination and export of finance capital. In their insatiable drive for profit, the imperialist bourgeoisies exploit the world's backward countries for raw materials, cheap labor and new markets. At the dawn of the modern imperialist epoch in the late 19th century, this exploitation was accomplished largely through direct colonial occupation and territorial annexation. Today, almost every last Third World country has won formal independence but remains subordinated to the imperialist powers, with the exception of the deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos.

The peoples of Libya are no strangers to the ravages of imperialism. The Turko-Italian war of 1911, in which thousands of Arabs were butchered, was a conflict over the possession of what would become Libya. That conflict in turn set off a 20-year resistance struggle against the Italian imperialists, who dropped poison gas on civilians and imprisoned more than 100,000 in concentration camps. After World War II, during which both Axis and Allied forces wreaked havoc on the country and its people, the imperialists patched together the state of Libya, replacing Italian rule with a British-imposed monarchy. That monarchy was in turn deposed in 1969 by the Free Officers' Movement that installed Qaddafi in power.

Ever since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the U.S. and other dominant capitalist countries have felt less constraint in carrying out their military adventures abroad. Today, with the capitalist world still mired in an economic crisis, those military attacks are combined with a concerted campaign against unions and the wage and benefit gains workers have won through struggle. Such evils are endemic to the system of capitalism in its decay. The only way out is the one blazed by the workers revolution of October 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party. The International Communist League is dedicated to building workers parties of the Bolshevik type that can infuse the proletariat with an understanding of its historic task of overturning the imperialist order and reorganizing society worldwide on an egalitarian socialist basis. ■

Reuters

**Paris: French president Nicolas Sarkozy (right) greets Libyan opposition leader Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, formerly of Qaddafi's regime, April 20.**

Cyriel Martin

**April 18: Tunisian immigrants in Ventimiglia, Italy, seek papers that would allow them to cross border into France.**


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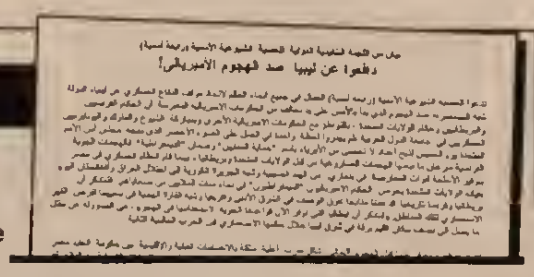

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# Defend ILWU...

*(continued from page 12*

a new leadership of the unions can be forged. This is not simply a matter of militancy but, as Cannon pointed out, a question of political program. What is needed is a leadership that will arm the workers with an understanding both of their social power and their historic interests to free all of humanity from the exploitation, all-sided misery and war inherent to a system based on production for profit. Forging such a leadership is in turn an integral part of the fight for a multiracial revolutionary workers party whose aim is no less than doing away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution.

### "Progressive" Labor Tops: Different Talk, Same Walk

In an interview on KPFA radio the day after the April 4 protests, ILWU Local 10 executive board member Clarence Thomas said that "one of the reasons" no Local 10 member was allowed to speak "is because the Democratic Party is not in favor of workers taking independent action." True enough. But when asked if he was opposed to the unions continuing to pour millions into backing the Democrats and funding Obama's re-election campaign, Thomas responded that the unions should support only those Democrats who would be "accountable" to the working class. In short, behind all the seemingly radical rhetoric that has historically been a trademark of the "progressive" labor tops in Local 10 is the same old shell game of peddling the Democrats as a party that can be made to serve the interests of the working class and the oppressed if, in Thomas' words, their feet are "held to the fire."

Last year, the Local 10 leadership pulled out all the stops to mobilize the ranks for the election of Democrat Jean Quan as mayor of Oakland. Boosted as a "friend of labor," Quan was the headline speaker at the Oakland April 4 rally. Denouncing Wisconsin governor Walker for stripping public workers unions of the right to bargain for their members, Quan contrasted the good offices of her administration, declaring: "We will have layoffs but they will come as part of collective bargaining." It would be hard to find a more chemically pure expression of the role played by the Democratic Party. The Republicans revel in taking out the knife to slaughter the unions. The Democrats hand the knife to the union bureaucrats to slash the wages and benefits of their members in the name of "preserving collective bargaining."

That's exactly what the union leaders following the Democrats, who had already agreed to such givebacks, were willing to do in Wisconsin. In California, the bureaucrats promote Democratic governor Jerry Brown, who has axed millions from social programs for the poor, as a man they can do business with.

But Quan's appeal for the unions to sacrifice more jobs did not go down well with much of the crowd at the Oakland rally. She was drowned out in a chorus of booing, a response aptly described by one reporter as reflecting "a schism between the labor leaders who invited Quan to headline their rally and rank-and-file workers impatient with years of government cut-backs" (*Bay Citizen*, 4 April). It is precisely such burgeoning anger that the labor tops are working overtime to head off.

At the same time, calls for a "general strike" have been coming from left-talking bureaucrats like Ken Riley, president of ILA Local 1422 in Charleston, South Carolina. Heading into an "Emergency Labor Meeting" held in Cleveland on March 4-5, which was called to "explore together what we can do to mount a more militant and robust fight-back campaign to defend the interests of working people," Riley said, "I don't see any other way than a general workers strike." But there was no call for any such action coming out of this meeting, which drew some 100 of the more radical-sounding and even "socialist" labor fakers and their hangers-on. Rather, the best they could choke out was that labor "must go to the streets," meekly adding that "where possible" the participants would promote "industrial actions" on April 4.

Evidently, they did not find it "possible." Instead, the April 4 protests are being portrayed as helping build "momentum" toward a general strike. This is simply to provide some militant-sounding cover for a program these labor fakers share in common with the top AFL-CIO officialdom: reliance on the capitalist state. The "perspectives" approved by those attending the Cleveland meeting advise: "There is plenty of money available without demanding givebacks from public employees, but this requires changing our nation's priorities to raise taxes on the rich, redirect war dollars to meet human needs, and more—all demands that we must place on the federal government." Far from building momentum for any kind of real labor action, much less a general strike, such appeals serve merely to dissipate and divert the workers' anger into the illusion that the government can be pressured into serving their needs.

Acme

**San Francisco, 5 July 1934: "Bloody Thursday" assault by cops killed two striking longshoremen, sparked citywide general strike.**

A central chant at both the SF and Oakland rallies was "tax the rich!" The banks, corporations and other capitalist enterprises are sitting on mountains of cash, the ill-gotten gains of a system based on the exploitation of labor for the profits of the few. But the working class is not going to get its hands on this money by appeals to the federal government, whose purpose is not to "meet human needs" but to defend and increase the profitability of American imperialism.

Capitalist governments might temporarily increase tax rates for the rich to meet the needs of the ruling class as a whole, such as gearing up for war or bailing out their economies at times of crisis. And in the face of class or other social struggle, the rulers may shell out some money to buy social peace. But once such peace is purchased, the benefits gained through struggle come under attack, and all the more so in times of economic crisis like today. What they take out of the hides of the working class and oppressed at home they invest in waging war against the workers and oppressed abroad to expand their spheres of exploitation and their domination around the globe. These "priorities" cannot and will not change short of getting rid of the profit system in which they are rooted.

For the workers to reclaim the wealth that is the product of their labor, they have to break the power of the bourgeoisie and its state. That means fighting for a workers government that will expropriate the expropriators and put the wealth of this society to serving the needs of society under a planned socialist economy.

### Bureaucrats Feeling the Heat

It's not just left-talking labor bureaucrats who are mouthing the words "general strike." In his column in the March issue of the ILWU's *Dispatcher*, the union's International president, Robert McEllrath, wrote: "Holding a rally is usually the first thing we think of. It's good to feel pumped-up for a few hours or even a few days, but they're soon over and then people ask: 'now what do we do?' If the answer is, 'hold more rallies,' then maybe we need to think harder, because our goal has to be about winning public support, and if rallies don't help us accomplish that goal, maybe we need to be doing other things such as a general strike across the United States with support from all unions and labor." This is an extraordinary, indeed unheard-of, statement coming from an official in the upper echelons of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, for whom the very mention of working-class struggle is to be avoided like the plague. While it lacks credibility, it is a measure of the desperation of at least some of the union misleaders as they feel heat from the ranks.

The industrial unions have been ravaged, with the rate of unionization in the private sector now below 7 percent. Public workers are now the majority of union members in the country, and the laws being brought down against them challenge their survival. Asking "Will we be able to win over workers—many who once belonged to unions—but have since seen their pay, benefits, and job security go down?" McEllrath argues: "The stakes in this fight couldn't be higher, as it may determine whether the labor movement continues to shrink or survives long enough to organize and grow in the future."

While the ILWU holds real social power in its hands, the union itself is an increasingly isolated bastion of labor organization in a sea of unorganized workers on the docks and the inland warehouses. The union leadership has done little to nothing to organize these workers.

Standing amid the wreckage that their sellout policies have produced over the past 30 years and more, McEllrath is expressing the bureaucrats' concern for their own survival, which is, after all, dependent on having dues-paying members. To preserve their status, it is possible that they could be moved to take some kind of strike action. But that would not change their fundamental loyalty to the capitalist system, particularly as represented by the Democratic Party, which includes the labor officials among its key components. Following his musing over a general strike, McEllrath makes clear its purpose, arguing that "if we want more politicians to stand with us, then we'll need to rally a lot more troops to our side."

### For a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party!

The April 4 protests were called in conjunction with the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, who was killed in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was supporting a strike by black sanitation workers. The photos of these black workers with picket signs reading "I Am a Man" are a searing statement of the integral link between the struggles for labor rights and black rights. But while much was made at the protests of King's dedication to labor's cause, the truth is that King was a spokesman for reliance on the capitalist government, seeing the courts and the Democratic Party as the vehicles for legal reform of the racist status quo.

The myth that black people could achieve equality within the confines of racist American capitalism was ripped apart when the civil rights movement "came North." Here the forcible segregation of blacks in the ghettos was not a matter of a legal code but was and is rooted in the very foundation of capitalist rule in America. When the black masses in the Northern ghettos entered the struggle—fighting for real equality, for jobs, for decent housing and schools—the role of King and others in the liberal leadership of the civil rights movement was one of fearful containment. Thus, King supported the troops sent in to brutally suppress ghetto upheavals in the 1960s.

With the deindustrialization of large swaths of the U.S., the ghetto poor who once supplied a "reserve army of labor" to be employed when the bosses needed them have been written off as a "surplus population" by the capitalist rulers, their labor and very lives no longer seen as necessary for the production of profit. But black workers remain a militant backbone of organized labor—from the ILWU to the public workers unions—and are critical to linking the power of the working class to the simmering anger of the ghettos. If the unions are to fight for their very existence, they must take up the defense of the ghetto and barrio poor by fighting for jobs, quality housing, education, health care and more, and must as well defend the rights of immigrants, an increasingly important component of the working class. Organizing the unorganized is a life-and-death question for labor everywhere. Crucially it means a fight to break the open shop South, directly posing the need for labor to combat anti-black racism and anti-immigrant bigotry.

Many workers no longer buy the lie peddled by the trade-union bureaucracy and its "socialist" water boys that the election of Barack Obama would bring "change" they could "believe in." The massive protests in Wisconsin inspired many to believe that finally there might be some fight-back against the war on their unions, their families and their livelihoods. The leaden hands of the labor bureaucracy are trying to drown any such impulse. It doesn't have to be this way. There is a real explosive potential here. But to transform that potential into some successful class struggle poses the question of leadership. The labor misleaders must be ousted and replaced with workers' leaders who will link the fight to defend the unions to building a multiracial revolutionary workers party. This is the necessary instrument to lead the struggle to free the working class and the oppressed from the chains of exploitation, poverty and imperialist war. ■


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WORKERS VANGUARD

# Union Attacked for Solidarity with Public Workers

# All Labor Must Defend ILWU Local 10!

Port of Oakland on April 4.

WV Photo

## Reliance on the Democrats: Recipe for Defeat

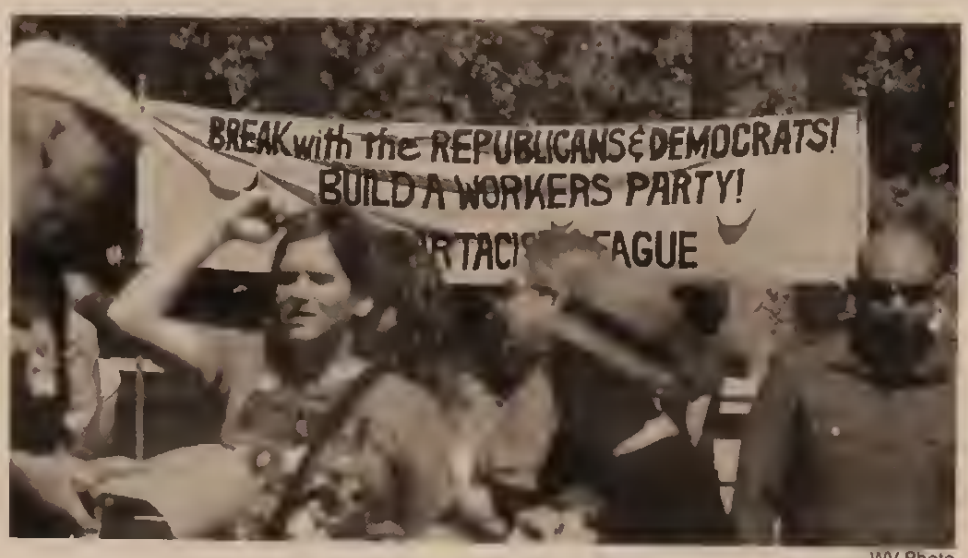
In their call for nationwide protests on April 4, the AFL-CIO tops said the day would be one of "rising up to support workers in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and other states." But the only genuine labor action was taken by members of Bay Area Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), who overwhelmingly stayed away from work that day. The port of Oakland was shut down for 24 hours.

Now the shipping companies represented by the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) are gunning for the union with a lawsuit against Local 10 and its president, Richard Mead, demanding that the ILWU foot the bill for "damages sustained" by the PMA as a result of the port shutdown. Although no price is named, in a similar suit East Coast shipping companies are demanding that the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) pay *$5 million* for a two-day shutdown of the ports in New York and New Jersey last September in response to a union-busting attack on ILA jobs. According to the head of the PMA, the employers also want the courts to enforce an injunction against further work stoppages.

***Locol 10 longshore workers stood up ogoinst the assoult on public workers unions. Now all of labor must stand up for Locol 10! Stop the PMA's union-busting attack!***

That Local 10 members gave up a day's pay in solidarity with embattled public workers unions is a real statement of the deeply felt anger and desire to fight at the base of the unions. This was also witnessed in the tens of thousands of workers who mobilized in protest outside the capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin, this winter. But the labor misleaders have done their level best to contain any militancy and redirect it back into support for the Democratic Party. This was the intended purpose of the April 4 "We Are One" rallies, as was baldly stated a week later by AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka in a speech to the National Women's Democratic Club in Washington, D.C. Declaring that "the energy of working people is infectious and their solidarity and commitment are inspiring," Trumka advised that "if Democrats are to take back the House in 2012, and to hold on to the White House and the Senate, it will be because they succeed in riding this wave."

The price of the bureaucrats' subordination of the unions to the political fortunes of the Democratic Party, which no less than the Republicans represents the interests of the capitalist class enemy, can be counted in busted unions, millions of unemployed and the living hell that is life for the ghetto and barrio poor and countless others who have been written off by a system based on the exploitation of labor. So beholden are the labor bureaucrats to the capitalist order that even the notion that there is a working class in this country has been deep-sixed, reflected in the pitch at the April 4 protests to "reclaim the middle class." By the same token, the union misleaders were desperate to avoid the remotest hint of working-class struggle against the one-sided class war by the capitalist exploiters and their state.




WV Photo

Spartacist banner at April 4 "We Are One" demonstration in Oakland.

At the "We Are One" rallies in Oakland and San Francisco, called by the Alameda and SF Labor Councils, the organizers would not even allow a speaker from ILWU Local 10, the only union whose members took any kind of actual labor action! There was no such censorship of a representative of the strikebreaking cops. One of the few speakers at the opening rally for the thousands-strong SF protest was the president of the Police Officers Association of San Francisco, who used the occasion to declare: "I am a member of labor just like you are." Far from being "union brothers," the cops are the armed thugs of the capitalist state whose job is to smash labor struggle. This would readily be seen if there were any real fight against the union-busting assault on public workers, just as it was seen when the SF police killed two workers in the 1934 longshore strike. The "bloody Thursday" assault by the cops was the spark for the citywide general strike that laid the basis for founding the ILWU.

The only speaker who even mentioned that Local 10 members had not worked on April 4 was the secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO, Stephanie Bloomingdale. But this was not to promote any such action by others, much less to address the crying need to mobilize the power of labor in strike action to fight the assault on public workers unions. On the contrary, Bloomingdale hailed the Wisconsin judge who put a temporary stay on the implementation of the state's union-busting bill for not letting Republican governor Scott Walker "get away" with it. But Walker did get away with it, as did the Ohio legislature, which passed an even more draconian anti-union law in the immediate aftermath.

In response to the PMA's lawsuit against Local 10, the San Francisco Labor Council passed a resolution calling for a "mass mobilization of all Bay Area Labor Councils and the California AFL-CIO" on April 25 at PMA headquarters. But the Labor Council officials did little to nothing to mobilize their membership for this protest, which drew about 150 people. Fine words will not stop the union-busters!

The capitalist rulers have been winning the war against labor because the power of the working class has been shackled by the class-collaborationist policies of the trade-union leadership. Labor's weapons are inherent in its collective organization—strike action, mass pickets, plant occupations, hot-cargoing of scab goods, etc. The capitalists' arsenal is the state—the courts, cops and military. The 1934 SF general strike, and mass strikes in Toledo and Minneapolis the same year, were pitched battles between workers and cops and other strikebreakers. All of them were led by reds. The 1934 Minneapolis strikes, which forged the Teamsters as a powerful industrial union, were led by supporters of the Trotskyist Communist League of America. James P. Cannon, the founding leader of American Trotskyism, underlined the political program that lay behind this victory:

> "The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt's Labor Board; they weren't fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal 'friend of labor' president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis....
>
> "Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity."
>
> —James P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944)

If the unions are to wage the battles necessary for their own defense and in the interests of all the oppressed, they must be mobilized in opposition to the capitalist state and independently of all of the political parties of the class enemy—Democrats, Republicans and Greens. That means a political struggle to get rid of the sellouts sitting on top of the unions who strangle the workers' fighting spirit. It is in the crucible of the class struggle that

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 980

13 May 2011


## U.S. Murders Its Frankenstein's Monster Bin Laden

# "War on Terror": Marauding Abroad, Repression at Home

## Imperialists Out of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Libya!

AP

Reuters

**Left: Aftermath of murderous U.S. drone attack in northwestern Pakistan, November 2010. Right: April 30 NATO bombing of Tripoli residence of Libyan leader Qaddafi's son, killing the son and three grandchildren.**

The May 1 assassination of Osama bin Laden in his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, was an act of imperialist arrogance typical of the U.S. "cops of the world." The day before, the NATO imperialists had bombed the house of Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi's son, missing Qaddafi, their intended target, but killing his son and three grandchildren. A few days later, a U.S. drone attack in Yemen killed two people in an unsuccessful attempt to take out Anwar al-Awlaki, one of at least four American citizens officially targeted for assassination by Washington.

The Obama administration did not even inform its Pakistani "allies" in advance of the incursion into their country by a military death squad. The raid was carried out by Navy SEAL commandos, a gang of specially selected and trained hitmen who shot and wounded bin Laden's youngest wife and killed his son and three others. In murdering the Al Qaeda leader and dumping his body in the Arabian Sea, Washington destroyed its own Frankenstein's monster. The U.S. had sponsored bin Laden and other Islamic reactionaries against the Red Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s as part of the decades-long imperialist drive to strangle the Soviet Union and foment capitalist counterrevolution.

Barack Obama, who came into office with broad support from the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy and the reformist left, is simply carrying out his duties as Commander-in-Chief. In escalating the bloody occupation of Afghanistan, he is doing what he promised to do if elected. Obama was more than willing to ignore other campaign promises in the interests of continuing the imperialist "war on terror." His decision to maintain the U.S. concentration camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, as well as the system of kangaroo-court military commissions for accused terrorists, underlines the continuity of Obama's policies with those of his Republican predecessor. Politicians and the bourgeois media are now engaged in a sick debate over how "effective" torture was in extracting information that helped track down bin Laden. Our position on those who have been tortured and brutalized—from Afghanistan and Iraq to Guantánamo—is simple: Free the detainees!

Seizing on the bin Laden kill, Obama appealed to "the sense of unity that prevailed on 9/11," waving yet again the bloody shirt of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Obama got a quick spike in the polls. But the "spontaneous" rallies of jubilation outside the White House and World Trade Center site, replete with bloodthirsty chauvinism, quickly dissipated and got little traction among working people. It is not so easy this time to whip up a spirit of shared "national interest" among workers, who have been thrown out of their jobs and homes by the millions and have seen their hard-won medical and pension benefits slashed by the capitalist class represented by the Democrats and Republicans. A common response even among workers who bought into the mission to "get" bin Laden was: OK, you got him, now when can we get out of Afghanistan? Obama made clear on May 1 that he had no intention of changing course in Afghanistan or relaxing the "anti-terror" crackdown on the home front.

The September 11 attack on the World Trade Center was a heinous crime, with nearly 3,000 people from all walks of life wantonly killed. Unlike the World Trade Center, the Pentagon was and is the command and administrative center of the U.S. imperialist military and, being a military installation, the possibility of getting hit comes with the territory. That fact did not make the attack an "anti-imperialist" act. In any case, terrorism almost always gets innocent people, including the passengers and crews on the hijacked airliners and the maintenance staff and secretaries at the Pentagon.

A Spartacist League/U.S. Political Bureau statement on the World Trade Center attack issued the day after (printed in *WV* No. 764, 14 September 2001) declared that those who perpetrated this act "embrace the same mentality as the racist rulers of America—identifying the working masses with their capitalist exploiters and oppressors!" The statement went on to warn:

> "It's an opportunity for the exploiters to peddle 'one nation indivisible' patriotism to try to direct the burgeoning anger at the bottom of this society away from themselves and toward an indefinable foreign 'enemy,' as well as immigrants in the U.S., and to reinforce their arsenal of domestic state repression against all the working people."

Draz/SIPA

**Bin Laden in 1989 directing CIA-backed *mujahedin* forces near Jalalabad, following Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.**

This is precisely what happened. Beginning with rounding up immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries for imprisonment and deportation, the U.S. government has shredded civil liberties and vastly expanded police powers, a particular danger to black people and to the labor movement as well. In December 2001, striking teachers in Middletown, New Jersey, were compared to the Taliban by the school board after they defied a back-to-work order. The following year, as West Coast longshoremen organized by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) were engaged in tough contract talks, the head of Homeland Security warned that strike action could be treated as a threat to "national security." The government later imposed the Transportation Workers Identification Credential, making longshoremen, rail workers and truckers undergo immigration review and criminal background checks—an invitation to purge blacks and other minorities as well as union militants. The FBI has also extended the "anti-terror" dragnet to include antiwar activists and reformist leftists, many of whom had supported Obama's election.

When U.S. imperialism launched its wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and in Iraq in

*continued on page 2*

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# War on Terror...

*(continued from page 1)*

2003, we, as revolutionary Marxists, stood for the military defense of those neocolonial countries without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Taliban or to Saddam Hussein's blood-soaked capitalist regime. We stressed that every victory for the imperialists encourages more predatory wars, while every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and oppressed the world over.

We called for *class struggle against the imperialist rulers at home*, in counterposition to the labor bureaucracy, which treacherously signed on to the "war on terror" while sometimes complaining about how it was applied. It is the historic task of the proletariat, led by a revolutionary party, to sweep away the system of capitalist imperialism. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained in a May 1917 speech titled "War and Revolution," this will lay the basis for the "socialist system of society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, by eliminating all exploitation of man by man and nation by nation, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war."

## Bin Laden: Product of Anti-Soviet Cold War

The post-September 11 "global war on terror" is but one of the many facets of capitalist reaction that followed the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Proclaiming themselves the "world's only superpower," the U.S. rulers have launched one bloody military action after another. Even as it remains embroiled in the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. is stepping up murderous drone attacks in Pakistan while NATO escalates its bombing campaign on behalf of the pro-imperialist opposition in Libya.

Pakistani military leaders are fuming over the brazen disregard for their country's national sovereignty manifested in the raid against bin Laden. U.S. officials, in turn, are demanding to know how bin Laden could have resided for years in a garrison town dominated by military installations without the protection of powerful figures in the Pakistani military or security forces.

Jane Therese

**October 2001: Trenton, New Jersey, cops threaten passengers dragged off bus as "terrorist suspects" because they spoke "little English."**

The fact is that bin Laden and his ilk were promoted not only by the Pakistani authorities but, in the first instance, by the U.S. For decades, the U.S. fostered the growth of Islamic fundamentalism as a bulwark against "godless Communism" and even secular nationalism. In 1950, John Foster Dulles, who would become Secretary of State in the Eisenhower presidency, wrote: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it."

The origins of bin Laden's Al Qaeda stem from the U.S.-backed war against the Soviet Union's 1979 intervention in Afghanistan. In the biggest CIA covert operation in history, money and arms were funneled to the *mujahedin* (holy warriors) based in western Pakistan. The main conduit was Pakistan's top intelligence agency, the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate), led by fervent Islamist Hameed Gul. By the CIA's own estimate, as many as 70,000 Islamic fundamentalists recruited from more than 50 countries by the CIA and ISI were trained at Islamist schools, which still flourish in Pakistan.

Washington started funneling arms to the *mujahedin* soon after the Soviet-allied People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power in April 1978. As modernizing left nationalists, the PDPA attempted to implement a program for redistributing land, lowering the bride price, educating women and freeing them from the prison of the head-to-toe covering called the *burqa*. As the Islamic hierarchy launched a fierce insurgency, the Soviet Union intervened at the PDPA's request to prevent the collapse of its client regime. Beginning with Democrat Jimmy Carter and continuing under Republican Ronald Reagan, the U.S. seized on the Red Army intervention to launch a renewed anti-Soviet offensive across the globe, in particular waging a proxy war aimed at killing Soviet soldiers and officers in Afghanistan.

For Marxists, there was no question which side working people and the oppressed the world over had in this conflict. The threat of a CIA-backed Islamic takeover on the USSR's southern flank posed pointblank the need for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Moreover, the Soviet intervention and the possibility of a prolonged integration of Afghanistan into the Soviet system opened the perspective of social liberation for the Afghan masses, particularly women. This was, as we wrote at the time, the first war in modern history in which a central issue was the rights of women. While most professed leftists around the world echoed the imperialists in condemning the Soviet intervention, the international Spartacist tendency (now the International Communist League) uniquely raised the slogans: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"

Among those who flocked to enlist in the *jihad* against Communism was Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, the son of a construction magnate who had been a close friend of the former Saudi king, Faisal. In Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (2000), bin Laden recounts that his "volunteers were trained by Pakistani and American officers. The weapons were supplied by the Americans, the money by the Saudis."

The *New York Times* took note of this

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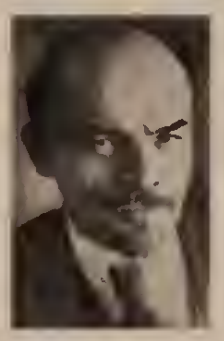
## In Commemoration of the Paris Commune

TROTSKY



LENIN

*On the 140th anniversary of the Paris Commune, we honor the heroic proletarian militants who seized power in the French capital in March 1871, the first historical expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Two months later, amid a reactionary frenzy whipped up by the bourgeoisies of Europe, French troops drowned the Commune in blood, massacring tens of thousands and imprisoning or deporting tens of thousands more. In a 1927 American Communist Party pamphlet, Max Shachtman, quoting from Karl Marx's 1871* The Civil War in France, *outlined the bold measures taken by the Communards, despite shortcomings, to establish workers democracy and begin undertaking socialist measures. Among the Commune's best militants were members of the International Workingmen's Association (First International), of which Marx was a principal leader.*

The Commune took hold of the old bureaucratic and militarist apparatus, the bourgeois state, and crushed it in its hands, and on its broken fragments it placed the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workingmen of Paris organized as the ruling class of France. With a single stroke it abolished the standing army of the Second Empire and the Third Republic and replaced it with the people's militia, a force, directly responsible to the Commune, of all the men capable of bearing arms....

The ruling body was based upon a real proletarian democracy, providing for the recall of unsatisfactory representatives, abolishing special allowances, paying all state officials the wages of workers, and realizing that "ideal of all bourgeois revolutions cheap government by eliminating the two largest items of expenditure—the army and the bureaucracy." The parliamentarism of the bourgeois society was smashed and the Commune transformed itself into a "working corporation legislative and executive at one and the same time," and held itself up to the provinces of France as the mirror of their own future. Church and State were separated, ecclesiastical property was confiscated and all education secularized.

The pawned property and furniture of the workers were returned, the workers were relieved of the payment of the overdue rents, it abolished the sickening piety of charity and "relief," and resumed the pay of the National Guard. Thru Frankel, the Internationalist delegate of labor, it took its first steps, however few and unclear, to destroy the system of capitalist production and socialize it by turning it over to the trade unions; to ameliorate the conditions of the workers; to enforce a "fair wage" proviso in Commune contracts and abolish the abominable system of fines and garnisheeing of wages by employers; it planned the institution of the eight-hour day. Its internationalist character was testified to by the Hungarian, Frankel's presence as delegate of labor, Dombrowski and Wroblewski, the Poles, in the defense.

Its heroic and noble spirit of sacrifice has been left as a revolutionary legacy to the new generations of the avenging proletariat. The Commune was a dim glass in which was reflected the rise of that greater and more powerful dictatorship of the proletariat, the successful proletarian revolution in Russia.

—Max Shachtman, *1871: The Paris Commune* (1927)


**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*

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**No. 980** **13 May 2011**


## Philly MOVE Massacre 13 May 1985

UPI

**Racist capitalist rulers wage war on the home front: Police bombing of MOVE commune in Philadelphia killed eleven MOVE members, including five children. An entire black neighborhood was destroyed in the ensuing inferno.**

# Canadian Elections:
# Imperialist War and War on the Workers

AP

**Prime Minister Stephen Harper addressing Canadian troops in Kandahar, Afghanistan, March 2006.**

TORONTO—The May 2 Canadian elections saw the right-wing Conservative (Tory) Party of Stephen Harper returned to office with a substantial majority, setting the stage for another four years of anti-working-class austerity attacks. The social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) of Jack Layton surged into second place, displacing the Liberal Party, which had by far the worst showing in its history.

Most of the NDP's gains came in Quebec, where the party had never before had any substantial support. The New Democrats won over so-called "soft nationalists" through pledges to expand the use of French in the federal public sector and reopen negotiations on the constitution, which successive Quebec governments have refused to sign since it was adopted in the 1980s. While the Tories and Liberals were reduced to a rump in the province, the bourgeois-nationalist Bloc Québécois, which had won the majority of Quebec seats in six straight federal elections, collapsed from 49 seats to a mere four.

The capitalist media hailed the New Democrats' rise in Quebec, saying, in the words of one right-wing pundit, "Better socialists than separatists." The NDP has a long and sordid record of upholding flag-waving "Canadian unity" against the national rights of the Québécois. And far from being "socialists," they ran an unabashedly pro-capitalist campaign focused on "support to small business" that was almost indistinguishable from that of the Liberals. As for the supposed eclipse of "separatism," the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois (PQ) remains far ahead in the polls leading up to the next Quebec provincial election.

Following the election, an editorial in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* (3 May) saluted both the Tory victory and the NDP's advance in Quebec but expressed concern at the continued national divide in Canada. "Not since 1917 has a majority government been so underrepresented in Quebec," it noted, adding:

> "And with the Parti Québécois well-placed to take eventual power in Quebec City, we are entering a new phase in Canada's dealings with Quebec. Mr. Layton and Mr. Harper will be fierce opponents in the House of Commons. On national unity, they must speak, as much as possible, with one voice."

Against the "national unity" pushed by the bourgeois rulers and their social-democratic agents, it is necessary to fight for a program of proletarian class struggle that defends all the oppressed, including by advocating independence for Quebec. We reprint below an April 19 statement on the elections by the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.

* * *

Days before the minority Conservative government was brought down last month, triggering the present election, parliament voted unanimously to support the military assault on Libya. The parliamentary parties may spar over budgets or the lies and obfuscation that are the stock in trade of capitalist politics, but *all* of them—the New Democrats included—spoke as one in supporting this new imperialist war on a neocolonial country.

The same parties are also united in ensuring that the working class bears the ravages of the worst capitalist economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Workers coast to coast have been devastated by job losses and anti-union attacks. Pensions, wages and the right to strike are under the gun; massive cuts to health care and other social services loom if the capitalists get their way. At the same time, the racist rulers seek to divide the working class, whipping up anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hatred, especially through the so-called "war on terror."

This one-sided class war didn't start with the Harper Tories. The Liberals carried out the most sweeping assaults on social programs in Canadian history in the 1990s and early 2000s. As for the social-democratic NDP, it has propped up Liberal and Tory regimes alike, thus taking responsibility for austerity cutbacks and massive hikes in military spending. Two years ago, Jack Layton obscenely told workers to have the "courage" to "take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can keep their job" (*Toronto Star*, 23 January 2009). Today, the New Democrats vow to balance the federal budget by 2014 while promising to spend just as much on the military as the Tories.

Reuters

Spartacist Canada

**Above: Canadian Hornet fighter jet in Sicily, part of NATO force targeting Libya, March 24. Below: Trotskyist League of Canada at Toronto union demonstration, April 9.**

The capitalist order means bloody imperialist occupations and wars from Afghanistan to Libya and poverty and misery for working people at home. A successful fight against this ruinous social system requires a leadership that understands that the interests of the working class and the capitalist class are counterposed and irreconcilable. With its hands on the means of production, the working class uniquely has the social power and interest in sweeping away this deeply inhumane system.

What is needed is a class-struggle workers party committed to smashing capitalist rule and instituting a rationally planned, socialist economy based on meeting human needs, not private profit. Such a party can only be built through political struggle against the NDP and the trade-union bureaucracy, whose quest for "partnership" between labour and capital has shackled the workers to the enemy class and sapped their fighting power.

Class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism abroad. While giving no political support to Libya's capitalist strongman Qaddafi, the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League, stands for the military defense of that semicolonial country against imperialism and the opposition forces who are acting on the imperialists' behalf. We demand that all NATO forces, including Canadian ships and planes, get out of the region, and we demand the immediate withdrawal of all U.S., Canadian and other imperialist forces from Afghanistan. Every step taken by workers in Canada and other imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their "own" ruling class is a step toward their liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression.

### No Vote to the NDP, Labor Front Men for Canadian Imperialism!

In endorsing the assault on Libya, the New Democrats did what comes naturally: over the years, they have backed just about all of Canada's wars and other military adventures. As for the servile reformists who falsely call themselves socialists, they too are doing what comes naturally in campaigning for the NDP in the election. It is a measure of the reformists' political bankruptcy that the NDP's support for the NATO bombing of Libya has not deterred them in the slightest.

And why would it? Groups like the International Socialists, Fightback, New Socialists and Socialist Action have all ardently championed the cabal of pro-imperialist "democrats," CIA stooges, monarchists and Islamists that comprise the Libyan opposition. They have done so in the name of a so-called "Libyan revolution." But what kind of "revolutionary" appeals to the imperialists to impose a "no-fly zone" and launch air strikes in their country, as the opposition leaders did from early on? The reformists' belated objections to Canadian and other imperialist military intervention aren't worth the paper they're written on.

We stand with V.I. Lenin, leader of the world's first successful workers revolution in October 1917 in Russia, who explained nearly a century ago that capitalist parliaments are "*instruments for the oppression* of the workers by the bourgeoisie." "Important questions under bourgeois democracy," Lenin emphasized, "are decided by the stock exchange and the banks." This holds true whoever is on the parliamentary benches: Tories, Liberals or NDP social democrats.

We Trotskyists would of course never accord any political support to the Conservatives or Liberals, who represent the ruling class of "united" Canada, or to the small-time capitalist Green Party. Similarly, we give no support to the Bloc Québécois, a party of the bourgeoisie in Quebec. The parasitic capitalist class that these parties represent accrues its profits through savage exploitation of the working class and is the most bitter and direct enemy of all the oppressed.

Nor is there any basis for workers and oppressed minorities to give the NDP even the most savagely critical support today. While linked to the unions through the labour bureaucracy, the NDP is what Marxists term a *bourgeois workers party*, whose thoroughly pro-capitalist program of maintaining the present system is sometimes packaged in "social justice" rhetoric. Whenever they have ruled provincially, as in Ontario and B.C. [British Columbia] in the 1990s or Manitoba and Nova Scotia today, the New Democrats administer capitalism against the interests of workers and the oppressed.

### Down With Anglo Chauvinism—Independence for Quebec!

Harper opened the election campaign with a vicious diatribe against a supposed "socialist-separatist" coalition government that would include the Bloc Québécois. This was an echo of the anti-Québécois chauvinism he unleashed against the short-lived Liberal-NDP coalition supported by the Bloc in late 2008. We declared in a 22 December 2008 statement that the Liberal-NDP coalition was "an *enemy* of the interests of the working class." At the same time we sharply denounced the wave of anti-Quebec bigotry, emphasizing:

> "As opponents of the chauvinism of 'our' capitalist rulers—and of all forms of nationalism—Marxists advocate independence for Quebec. We seek to get the national question off the agenda, to create conditions where it can be clear to the workers in both English Canada and Quebec that their own capitalist exploiters are the enemy, not each other. Absent this, chauvinist bigotry against Quebec and the national antagonisms that this generates will continue to divide the working class, undermining its ability to struggle against capitalist exploitation. The palpable anger among working people against the massive job losses must be directed

*continued on page 11*

# COMMEMORATING THE WAR THAT SMASHED SLAVERY

# FINISH THE CIVIL WAR!

*Below we conclude this article, Part One of which appeared in* WV *No. 979 (29 April).*

*PART TWO*

Racist hostility toward blacks figured prominently in the labor and socialist movements of the late 1800s/early 1900s, with the exception of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). But it was not until the 1920s that American Marxists actively took up the fight for black liberation, as part of the fight for communism. James P. Cannon, a founding American Communist and foremost leader of American Trotskyism for its first 30-plus years, makes *very* clear how exactly this came about. He writes:

> "The American communists in the early days, like all other radical organizations of that and earlier times, had nothing to start with on the Negro question but an inadequate *theory*, a false or indifferent *attitude* and the adherence of a few individual Negroes of radical or revolutionary bent.... *Everything new and progressive on the Negro question came from Moscow*, after the revolution of 1917, and as a result of the revolution—not only for the American communists who responded directly, but for all others concerned with the question."

Further:

> "Even before the First World War and the Russian Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were distinguished from all other tendencies in the international socialist and labor movement by their concern with the problems of oppressed nations and national minorities, and affirmative support of their struggles for freedom, independence and the right of self-determination. The Bolsheviks gave this support to all 'people without equal rights' sincerely and earnestly, but there was nothing 'philanthropic' about it. They also recognized the great revolutionary potential in the situation of oppressed peoples and nations, and saw them as important allies of the international working class in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism.
>
> "After November 1917 this new doctrine —with special emphasis on the Negroes —began to be transmitted to the American communist movement with the authority of the Russian Revolution behind it. The Russians in the Comintern started on the American communists with the harsh, insistent demand that they shake off their own unspoken prejudices, pay attention to the special problems and grievances of the American Negroes, go to work among them, and champion their cause in the white community."
>
> —James P. Cannon, *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (1962)

Beinecke Library

**Jamaican-born poet Claude McKay speaking on racial oppression in U.S. at Communist International's Fourth Congress in Moscow, 1922.**

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was the most important event of the 20th century and is our model for a successful proletarian revolution. As Cannon said, it "took the question of the workers' revolution out of the realm of abstraction and gave it flesh and blood reality." It demonstrated that the bourgeois state could not be reformed to serve the interests of the working class but had to be smashed and replaced by a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. It showed the need for a disciplined vanguard party based on a clear revolutionary program. The Bolsheviks' fight around the American black question is but one example of the hard, programmatic struggle that they waged to forge truly revolutionary Leninist vanguard parties around the world that could serve as tribunes of the oppressed and fight for international proletarian revolution.

## The Great Migration and Black Proletarianization

The defeat of Reconstruction reconsolidated blacks as a race-color caste. But it was the Great Migration of blacks to the North and to the urban centers of the South that established blacks as a strategic component of the proletariat. I recommend this new book by Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. For those too young to remember, the book gives a vivid picture of the wretched racist conditions of the South, as well as the struggles blacks faced in the North. It follows three different individuals who personify the different directions that this migration took: one who went from Florida to Harlem, one from Mississippi to Chicago, and one from Louisiana to California. It's a quite literate book; every chapter starts with a poem or quote from a famous black writer. The title, "The Warmth of Other Suns," comes from a poem by Richard Wright. Let me read the one by Langston Hughes called "One-Way Ticket":

> "I pick up my life
> And take it with me
> And I put it down in
> Chicago, Detroit,
> Buffalo, Scranton,
> Any place that is
> North and East,
> And not Dixie.
> "I pick up my life
> And take it on the train
> To Los Angeles, Bakersfield
> Seattle, Oakland, Salt Lake—
> Any place that is
> North and West,
> And not South.
> "I am fed up
> With Jim Crow laws,
> People who are cruel
> And afraid,
> Who lynch and run,
> Who are scared of me
> And me of them.
> "I pick up my life
> And take it away
> On a one-way ticket—
> Gone up North,
> Gone out West,
> Gone!"

Before World War I, something like 90 percent of all blacks lived in the South, and they were mostly rural. Wilkerson estimates that six million black people left the South in the decades from 1915 to 1970. That's a lot of people! In 1910, Chicago had a black population of about 2 percent. California in 1900 had only about 11,000 black people, which was less than 1 percent. When I first read statistics like this, they were hard to wrap my mind around because I had grown up in the 1960s, when the heavy battalions of labor, from longshoremen to auto to steel, were heavily black.

This migration and the migration to the urban centers of the South, along with the struggle for industrial unionization in the '30s, integrated blacks into the labor movement, although still at the lowest rungs and at the dirtiest and hardest jobs. Often blacks played a leading role in these labor struggles. Proletarianization gives you social power—at least, *potential* social power.

## Race-Color Caste

Now there was an ambiguity which ran through both the Communist Party and later the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in its revolutionary heyday as to whether the black question was a national question, or embryonic national question, and whether the slogan of self-determination was appropriate. Leon Trotsky himself tentatively advanced this position in the 1930s, coming at the question from his understanding of the national question in Europe. Like the early Communist International's intervention, Trotsky was primarily concerned that the American Trotskyists have a serious orientation to the black question and not capitulate to backward consciousness.

In practice, the SWP didn't act like the black question was a national question and was guided by an integrationist, class-struggle perspective. The party was able

UPI

State Archives of Florida

**Left: Evicted Southern sharecroppers, 1939. Right: Passengers in segregated railroad depot in Jacksonville, Florida, waiting to catch trains to North, 1921.**

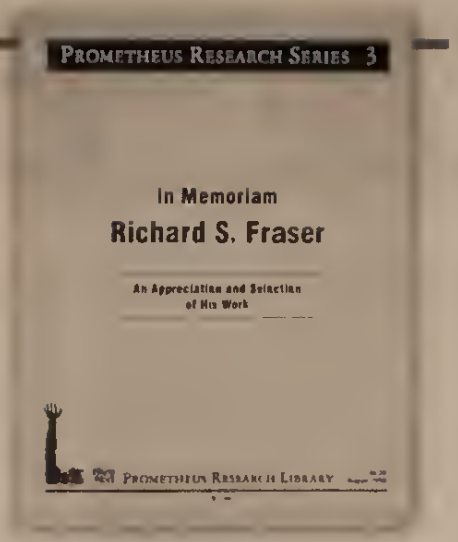
# BLACK LIBERATION THROUGH SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

to recruit several hundred black workers during World War II by acting as the most militant fighters against racist oppression in the factories, armed forces and American society at large. The SWP's courageous work, carried out in the face of government repression, was in stark contrast to the Communist Party, which, in line with its support to the Allied imperialist "democracies," explicitly opposed struggles for black equality during the war.

Dick Fraser joined the Trotskyist movement in 1934. He was a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party. He began a study of the black question in the late 1940s in response to the loss of hundreds of black worker recruits with the onset of the Cold War against the Soviet Union. He concluded that the problem was not with the SWP's practical, day-to-day work fighting discrimination and victimization of blacks but with the party's inadequate theoretical understanding. As Fraser wrote: "It is the historical task of Trotskyism to tear the Negro question in the United States away from the national question and to establish it as an independent political problem, that it may be judged on its own merits, and its laws of development discovered" ("For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Struggle" [1955], reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised]).

Fraser began from the premise that black people, whom he described as "the most completely 'Americanized' section of the population," were not an oppressed nation or nationality in any sense. Crucially, black people lacked any material basis for a separate political economy. Whereas the oppressed nations and nationalities of Europe were subjected to forced assimilation, American blacks faced the opposite: forcible segregation.

Fraser family




**Richard S. Fraser (1913-1988) pioneered Trotskyist understanding of black oppression in the U.S. *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, containing selection of his writings, is available for $7 from Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.**

Detroit News

**Striking auto workers in Detroit, 1945.**

Hence, in the struggle against black oppression, the democratic demand for self-determination—separation into an independent nation-state—just didn't make sense. As Fraser wrote in his 1963 piece "Dialectics of Black Liberation" (reprinted in *Revolutionary Integration: A Marxist Analysis of African American Liberation* [Red Letter Press, 2004]): "The Black Question is a unique racial, not national, question, embodied in a movement marked by integration, not self-determination, as its logical and historical motive force and goal. The demand for integration produces a struggle that is necessarily transitional to socialism and creates a revolutionary Black vanguard for the entire working class."

He had earlier noted in "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question":

> "The goals which history has dictated to [black people] are to achieve complete equality through the elimination of racial segregation, discrimination, and prejudice. That is, the overthrow of the race system. It is from these historically conditioned conclusions that the Negro struggle, whatever its forms, has taken the path for direct assimilation. All that we can add to this is that these goals cannot be accomplished except through the socialist revolution."

In *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Wilkerson makes a point that confirms Fraser's point about blacks being the most American of Americans. She poses the Great Migration as a sort of internal immigration. But when she posed this analysis to the over 1,000 black people that she interviewed for this book, "nearly every black migrant I interviewed vehemently resisted the immigrant label." They insisted that "the South may have acted like a different country and been proud of it, but it was a part of the United States, and anyone born there was born an American." Further, that "for twelve generations, their ancestors had worked the land and helped build the country." Indeed, black people's labor has been central to building this country, but it will take a socialist revolution by the multiracial working class for them to realize the fruits of their labor.

Fraser lost the fight in the Socialist Workers Party on the black question. But his work found resonance in the Spartacist League. Despite political differences with him, he was invited to the SL/U.S. National Conference in 1983 and spoke on the question of the organization of labor/black leagues, saying: "I am humbled by the knowledge that things that I wrote 30 years ago, which were so scorned by the old party, have had some important impact, finally."

In the U.S. at the time of the civil rights movement, the SWP was the only organization, at least formally, with an authentically revolutionary program based on Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. However, by the early 1960s, ground down by the isolation and McCarthyite witchhunting of the 1950s, the SWP had lost its revolutionary bearings. The party's qualitative departure from its erstwhile revolutionary working-class politics began around 1960, when it slid into the role of uncritical cheerleaders for the petty-bourgeois radical-nationalist leadership of the Cuban Revolution. The SWP thus abandoned the centrality of the working class and the necessity of building Trotskyist parties in every country.

The abandonment of the fight for Marxist leadership of the black struggle in the U.S. was the domestic reflection of the SWP's denial of the centrality of the proletariat in the destruction of capitalism. Its leadership willfully abstained from the civil rights movement while cheerleading from afar for both the liberal reformism of King and the reactionary separatism of the Nation of Islam. This meant that historic struggles that were to shape a whole generation took place without the intervention of a revolutionary party.

## Contradictions in SNCC

Let me say a little more about my experiences in Mississippi in 1965 and how I saw this period. I certainly wasn't in the Spartacist League; I was unfamiliar with any left group except the Communist Party, which my parents had been members of and which I rejected as very "old school." My point is that I came back from Mississippi frustrated and confused by my experiences in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). This period is often portrayed in triumphalist fashion: MLK and the good fight against legalized segregation, etc., etc. At first I assumed that my project in Gulfport was particularly disorganized, but in retrospect I could see that SNCC was *politically* coming apart at the seams.

Now SNCC had started as the youth extension of MLK's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. As black liberals, their initial goal was formal, legal equality, or "northernizing the South." The political strategy was to seek the support of the liberal establishment and try to get the federal government to help black people. That's really what all this "pacifism" was about—appealing to the Northern Democrats and being respectable. But after some hard experiences in the South with cops, Klan, Democrats, etc., SNCC had moved to the left.

When I was in Mississippi, there was a lot of talk about going to the North to confront black oppression there—segregated housing, unemployment, rotten schools, police brutality. The American bourgeoisie might go along with getting rid of *legal* segregation, but black equality? An end to black oppression? No way—too central to the American capitalist system! And there was no consensus in SNCC on how to deal with capitalism. The only two answers I heard in the SNCC of that time were back to MLK liberalism or an incoherent black nationalist separatism. Without the intervention of communists, most SNCC radicals were not able to make the leap to proletarian socialism.

I want to deal with the contradictions that I saw in SNCC. First of all, when I was in Mississippi, the Los Angeles Watts upheaval broke out. Martin Luther King said that "as powerful a police force as possible" should be brought to L.A. to stop it. SNCC activists on my project cursed King's name because it was clear that he was calling for pacifism for us and guns for the National Guard to put down black people in the ghettos.

Then we heard that our project might be attacked by the KKK. So people on my SNCC project proposed talking to the FBI about it. Being a red-diaper baby, I was horrified and opposed to this. I had seen my mother kick an FBI agent in the shins when he tried to barge into my parents' house. But it was decided, and we all went down there together. The people on my project had assumed the FBI agent would be a Northerner, but he was a real Southerner with a heavy drawl. When he asked for our address, I was shaking my head and trying to get them to stop, but they gave it to him. Soon thereafter we heard through the grapevine that our house was in danger of being bombed! I wasn't surprised and went around saying "I told you so" for days.

Worried about the threats, we moved out of our house for a while. With another young white woman, I went to stay with a very friendly black family. When night fell, they urged me and the other woman to sleep in one of the bedrooms. They kept insisting that there would be "no violence, no violence." When I looked around the room, I could see that every guy there was holding a rifle or a shotgun. They kept saying that there would be "no violence from the Klan." I just thought, "Well, this is the kind of 'non-violence' I'm for!" The Spartacist League, as you can read in the document "Black and Red," was certainly for armed self-defense in the South. From my own experience, I think there was a lot more of it actually going on than people realize today.

Then we had a community meeting and were going to talk about the work we were doing. I suggested that we talk about this new thing called the Vietnam War. I sure got landed on for that! First, I was told that we were conducting a single-issue campaign around civil rights. When that wasn't too convincing, I was told that "blacks were very patriotic" and wouldn't appreciate criticism of American foreign policy. Later when I heard Muhammad Ali saying "No Viet Cong ever called me n----r" and saw that black people hated the war in Vietnam, I was sorry we hadn't brought it up.

I never got to meet the longshoremen I mentioned who threatened to strike if the lunch counters didn't get integrated. They were just the power in the background, but I was impressed with them. SNCC didn't know what to do with them, but it seemed to me that there must be some left group out there who knew how to organize the power of labor. In the Spartacist League's successful anti-Klan united fronts, I saw that power consciously mobilized in the fight for black freedom.

Several times people on my project asked me questions about Marxism; I would try to answer but I just didn't know enough. That's why it was such a crime and a betrayal that the SWP didn't intervene. The Spartacist tendency originated in the early 1960s as a left opposition, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT), in the SWP. A central axis of the political fight was for an active intervention into the Southern civil rights movement based on the perspective of revolutionary integrationism—i.e., linking the struggle for black democratic rights to working-class struggle against capitalist exploitation. The SL was small, predominantly white, and the main body of young black activists moved rapidly toward separatism.

## Northern Ghetto Upheavals

With the civil rights movement unable to change the hellish conditions of black life in the North, there was a rising level of frustrated expectations. There were a whole series of ghetto upheavals in the mid to late '60s that were repressed with extreme police/National Guard violence. As we wrote in "Black and Red": "Yet despite the vast energies expended and the casualties suffered, these outbreaks have changed nothing. This is a reflection of the urgent need for organizations of real struggle, which can organize and direct these energies toward conscious political objectives. It is the duty of a revolutionary organization to intervene where possible to give these outbursts political direction." In line with this policy, at the time of the 1967 ghetto rebellion in Newark, New Jersey, we put out a very short agitational leaflet (less than a page, if you can believe) titled "Organize Black Power!" which you can see in *Spartacist* Bound Volume No. 1.

Despite their radical and often white-baiting rhetoric, most of the black nationalists quickly re-entered the fold of mainstream bourgeois politics. They offered themselves to the white ruling class as overseers of the ghetto masses. They became administrators of the various poverty

*continued on page 10*

# Young Spartacus

AP photos

## Egypt and the Near East

# Permanent Revolution vs. Arab Nationalism

*We print below an edited and slightly excerpted New York Spartacus Youth Club forum given on March 9 at the City College of New York (CCNY).*

Major events are rocking the Near East and North Africa. What we have to offer is a revolutionary internationalist program, captured in the placard here that says, "Down With the Oil Sheiks, Emirs, Kings, Colonels and Zionist Rulers—Workers to Power! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!" This talk is going to motivate that perspective, which is a Marxist perspective. It is going to primarily focus on Egypt, the history of the Palestine/Israel question and the long and brutal role that imperialism has played in this region.

Recently Obama, the current U.S. imperialist Commander-in-Chief, has been praising the fight for "democracy." But during the upheaval in Egypt, Obama expressed support for Hosni Mubarak's regime, especially the "reforms" promised by Vice President Omar Suleiman, who has long played a key role in Washington's "war on terror" torture program. The U.S. has poured $1.3 billion a year into arming the Egyptian military, as it does to prop up bloody dictators worldwide. After Mubarak resigned, Obama said that the U.S. stands for "a credible transition to a democracy."

WV Photo

**Spartacist placard at NYC protest against Mubarak regime, January 29.**

**Left: Striking Suez Canal Company workers in Ismailia City demand resignation of boss, pay raise and social equality, February 9. Right: Protesters atop military vehicle in Cairo, January 29. Sign reads, "Down With Mubarak."**

What U.S. imperialism means by "democracy" are the corpses of more than one million Iraqis who died as a result of the 2003 invasion and occupation, as well as the imperialist barbarism inflicted by U.S./NATO forces upon the peoples of Afghanistan. Last week, NATO aircraft shot down nine young boys collecting firewood in Afghanistan. The sheiks, despots and strongmen that litter the Near East, along with the Israeli rulers, act as U.S. imperialism's agents. Take a recent back-page ad in the *New York Times* for *Our Last Best Chance* by King Abdullah of Jordan. The ad quoted Bill Clinton, who as president bombed and starved Iraq for eight long years, praising the Jordanian monarch—the same monarch who today suppresses protests against his rule. So don't be fooled by these imperialist war criminals, whether in Democratic or Republican clothing. Now they are threatening Libya and have already implemented sanctions; we say imperialists hands off! [See "Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!" *WV* No. 977, 1 April.]

It's against these imperialists' agents that the masses in Tunisia and Egypt have been revolting, fed up with unemployment, rising food prices and the widespread corruption of the Arab capitalist rulers and their families and cronies. Inspired by the protests in Tunisia, protesters in Egypt courageously faced down a massive crackdown that left hundreds dead. After nearly 30 years of governing Egypt with an iron fist, Mubarak stepped down following 18 days of unprecedented upheaval throughout the country, with demonstrators unleashing their fury at the regime by targeting police and security buildings as well as those belonging to the ruling National Democratic Party. These protests were significantly topped off by a wave of labor strikes.

I'm sure that everyone saw the mass celebrations of millions of people that erupted in Cairo's Tahrir Square and in cities throughout the country over what seemed like the end of a brutal dictatorship that ruled under emergency law, imprisoning and disappearing its opponents in Egypt's vast torture chambers. But while Mubarak is no longer in power, the central core of Egypt's bonapartist capitalist state apparatus, the military, is now directly in power. A doctor in Cairo was quoted as saying, "They cut off the head, but the body is still moving."

The military announced the dissolution of Mubarak's sham parliament and the formation of a panel to "amend" the equally sham constitution. They have denounced the continuing strikes as leading to "negative results" and ordered workers to return to their jobs. Two weeks ago it was reported that soldiers beat protesters and burned down a reconstituted tent camp in Tahrir Square. In capitalist society, which is divided into antagonistic social classes whose interests are irreconcilably opposed, the question of the state is a crucial one. Together with the police, courts and prisons, the army is at the core of the capitalist state, which is an apparatus for the violent suppression of the working class and the oppressed. Above all, the drive to "restore stability" in Egypt is aimed at the working class.

The strikes launched by tens of thousands of workers amid the anti-Mubarak protests continued after Mubarak's fall. These included some 6,000 workers on the Suez Canal, through which 8 percent of world trade travels, although Canal pilots continued to work, which meant ships kept moving. Thousands of textile and steel workers also went on strike in Suez, which saw some of the most militant protests. In the wake of Mubarak's fall, strikes spread to steel workers outside the capital, postal workers, textile workers and thousands of oil and gas workers.

What is necessary in this situation is for the working class to emerge as an independent force and lead the struggles of the region's unemployed youth, urban poor, peasants, women and other oppressed sectors fighting for freedom. Why the working class? Because this is the one class with the social power and historic interest to overthrow capitalism. In fighting for economic demands, such as against poverty-level wages, the working class is demonstrating the unique position it holds in making the wheels of the capitalist economy turn. This social power, to stop and take over those wheels, gives the working class the potential to lead all the impoverished masses in struggle against their unbearable oppression.

### The Trap of Egyptian Nationalism

There is a lot of empty, classless talk about how "we are all Egyptian" (I guess minus Mubarak) and the "people's revolution." Other than the upper echelons of the Tunisian and Egyptian bourgeoisies, these upheavals have been characterized by an outpouring of all social classes. In demonstrations, Egyptian flags have been everywhere. What this reflects is a nationalist consciousness that is also expressed in widespread illusions that the army is a "friend of the people." These illusions are a deadly danger to the working people and the oppressed.

From the time of Gamal Abdel Nasser's Free Officers' coup in 1952, which toppled the monarchy and ended the British occupation of the country, the army has been viewed as the guarantor of Egyptian national sovereignty. In fact, the military has been the backbone of one dictatorship after another since that time. In 1952 it was mobilized by Nasser to shoot down textile strikers in Kafr Al-Dawwar near Alexandria. In 1977 it was mobilized by Anwar el-Sadat to "restore order" after a two-day countrywide upheaval over the price of bread. Today, despite claiming that it did not oppose the anti-Mubarak demonstrators, the military arrested hundreds and tortured many. We say: ***Down with the emergency law! Free all victims of state repression!***

There has also been a lot of talk about the Facebook and Twitter "revolution," which I guess the military is now a part of since they post communiqués on their Facebook page. But, as a young comrade said at a recent event, "The working class needs a vanguard party, not a Facebook profile!" One of the technologically savvy youth leaders, Google exec Wael Ghonim, was arrested for using Facebook to organize the early protests. He epitomizes the logic of a bourgeois-nationalist program: Upon his release, he kissed his captors, praised the "sincerity" of the military and told striking workers that now is not the time to fight for $100 a month if you only make $70. He is speaking for the capitalist class and fighting for its interests.

Nationalism arose in connection with the development of capitalism, which strove to establish unified national markets. While nationalism in Egypt is fueled by a history of imperialist subjugation,

it has long served the bourgeois rulers by obscuring the class divide between the tiny layer of filthy rich at the top and the brutally exploited and impoverished workers and peasants at the bottom. Nationalism is a key obstacle to revolutionary proletarian consciousness. We oppose those fake socialists who promote bourgeois nationalism.

The Egyptian youth who initiated the "January 25 Revolution" have been hailed by one and all, including bourgeois oppositionists and the state-run media that had, until the fall of Mubarak, denounced them as foreign agents. Among these mainly petty-bourgeois youth, a good number have been animated not only by their own grievances but particularly by the struggles of the Egyptian proletariat. I mentioned the recent strikes, but what rarely gets reported is that, over the last ten years, the Egyptian workers have engaged in over 3,000 strikes, sit-ins and other actions, involving over two million workers. These strikes were carried out in defiance of the corrupt leadership of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation, which was established by Nasser in 1957 as an arm of the state.

The petty bourgeoisie is an intermediate class comprising many layers with disparate interests, from students to peasants. It is incapable of advancing a coherent, independent perspective and will necessarily fall under the sway of one of the two main classes of capitalist society: the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Among the militant youth who showed incredible courage in taking on the Mubarak regime, those committed to fighting on behalf of the oppressed must be won to the revolutionary internationalist program of Trotskyism. Such elements will be crucial to forging a revolutionary party, which, like Lenin's Bolsheviks, will be founded through a fusion of the most advanced workers with declassed intellectuals won to the side of the working class.

Basil Blackwell Inc.

**Leon Trotsky in jail after 1905 Revolution in Russia.**

In Egypt, this party must fight for the program of permanent revolution. What do we mean by permanent revolution? This theory embodies the experience of the 1917 Russian Revolution. What we are talking about is the seizure of power by the working class in countries of uneven and combined development, which is the only way to break the chains of political despotism and economic and social backwardness. The victorious working class would fight to extend its revolutionary victory to the centers of world imperialism, laying the basis for an international planned economy that would end scarcity. Elementary democratic tasks such as legal equality for women, complete separation of religion and state, agrarian revolution to give land to the peasants—as well as ending joblessness and grinding poverty—cannot be achieved without the overthrow of the capitalist order. The indispensable instrument for the working class is a proletarian revolutionary party, which can be built only through relentless struggle against all bourgeois forces: the military, the Muslim Brotherhood and the bourgeois liberals like ElBaradei, who all falsely claim to support the struggles of the masses.

Despite limited land reform carried out in the '50s and early '60s by nationalist regimes in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, the pattern of land ownership in the region still resembles what it was a century ago. Wealthy landowners possess large tracts of the best land while millions of desperate peasants, unable to scratch out a living on tiny plots of arid land, have settled in the vast shantytowns that ring Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad. Cairo professionals have cell phones and computers and large numbers of Egyptian workers are concentrated in modern, foreign-owned auto plants. Meanwhile, you have barefoot villagers in the Nile valley tilling their fields with tools that have scarcely changed since the age of the pharaohs. With nearly half the population living on $2 a day or less, popular hatred for Mubarak was definitely driven by the estimated $70 billion fortune amassed by his family. Inhuman poverty and squalor compete with grotesque displays of wealth.

While Egypt is a regional power in its own right, it is nonetheless a neocolony whose brutal and murderous bourgeoisie is tied by a million strings to world imperialism, which benefits from the exploitation, oppression and degradation of the neocolonial masses. Beginning with Sadat's rule in 1970, Egypt has also been a strategic ally of Zionist Israel and, in recent years, has aided in the starvation blockade of the Palestinians in Gaza, including by sealing the border in Sinai.

Conditions like those in Egypt are what Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution, described as uneven and combined development, in which modern industry has been superimposed on largely peasant-based societies. This was also true of Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution. Though itself an imperialist power, Russia at the time, unlike the more advanced capitalist countries of West Europe, had not had a bourgeois-democratic revolution and remained mired in social and economic backwardness. Emerging late in the capitalist era, the weak and corrupt Russian bourgeoisie was dependent on Western capital and feared the proletariat far too much to mobilize them for an onslaught against the tsarist autocracy. The autocracy ruled over a vast "prison house of peoples" and a mass of impoverished peasants. At the same time, foreign capitalist investment had given rise to a small but combative industrial working class that was concentrated in modern large-scale industry.

The Russian Revolution was a confirmation of permanent revolution: the working class overthrew bourgeois rule, freed the country from the imperialist yoke, gave land to the peasants and freed the many oppressed nations and peoples of the former tsarist empire. The achievement of democratic tasks was combined with socialist tasks, such as the expropriation of the means of production by the workers state, which laid the basis for the development of a collectivized planned economy. The destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 was a world-historic defeat for working people and the oppressed and enormously strengthened the forces of capitalist reaction on a global scale.

What you learn when you study the Russian Revolution is that the victory of the revolution was possible only because of the Bolsheviks' irreconcilable struggle against all variants of bourgeois nationalism, populism and liberalism. They struggled against the Menshevik opportunists, who tailed the liberal bourgeoisie, and also against the peasant-based Socialist Revolutionary Party, which was hostile to proletarian class rule. As Lenin put it, "Unity is a great thing and a great slogan. But what the workers' cause needs is the *unity of Marxists*, not unity between Marxists, and opponents and distorters of Marxism" ["Unity," April 1914]. Later I will get to the opponents and distorters of Marxism today who tail the liberal and not-so-liberal bourgeois forces of our day.

So in summary, achieving genuine national and social liberation requires mobilizing the proletariat in revolutionary struggle against both the imperialists *and* the domestic bourgeoisie. A proletarian revolution in Egypt resulting in a workers and peasants government would have an electrifying impact on workers and the oppressed throughout North Africa, the Near East and beyond. Over one-quarter of all Arabic speakers live in Egypt, a country of over 80 million that has the largest working class in the region.

### The Near East: Yesterday and Today

Now you can't understand the Near East today without understanding that the region was literally carved up following World War I [1914-18] by the British and other colonial powers that drew the borders of Iraq and other countries of the Near East. Winston Churchill, that imperialist pig and major player in this chapter of history, said during WWI, "I think a curse should rest on me because I am so happy. I know this war is smashing and shattering the lives of thousands every moment—and yet—I cannot help it—I enjoy every second I live." Following the

*continued on page 8*

# Federal Assault Charges for Pie Throwing

## Michigan

*The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—sent the following letter to Assistant U.S. Attorney Hagan Frank on 3 May 2011.*

The Partisan Defense Committee vigorously protests the prosecution of Ahlam Mohsen and Max Kantar for the "crime" of throwing an apple pie in the face of Michigan Democratic Senator Carl Levin. It is outrageous that Mohsen spent even one night in jail for what was obviously a harmless prank as a form of political protest.

On August 16, 2010, Mohsen pied Levin at an event in Big Rapids, Michigan after Kantar read a statement protesting Levin's continued support of the U.S.'s occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and U.S. support to Israel. They were arrested and Mohsen was held for over a week in Mecosta County Jail. Mohsen was not released until her exorbitant bond of $250,000 was reduced. Then in December, both activists were indicted on federal assault charges. Ludicrously, one of these charges made reference to a U.S. Code section prohibiting the attempted murder of public officials while the official is engaged in his "official duties."

WNEW

**"Attempted murder" of Frank Sinatra by slapstick comedian Soupy Sales In 1960s.**

What's next, declaring Soupy Sales to have been a terrorist, or charging Sara Lee with material support to terrorism? This is nothing but an attempt to squelch political dissent and send a chilling message to anyone who protests U.S. imperialism and the carnage it has visited on the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Under the pressure of facing these extreme charges, both Mohsen and Kantar pleaded guilty to misdemeanor assault of a public official with their sentencing scheduled for June 20th. They could spend up to a year in jail and face up to $100,000 in fines. We demand that all of the charges against these two activists be dropped!

## Letter

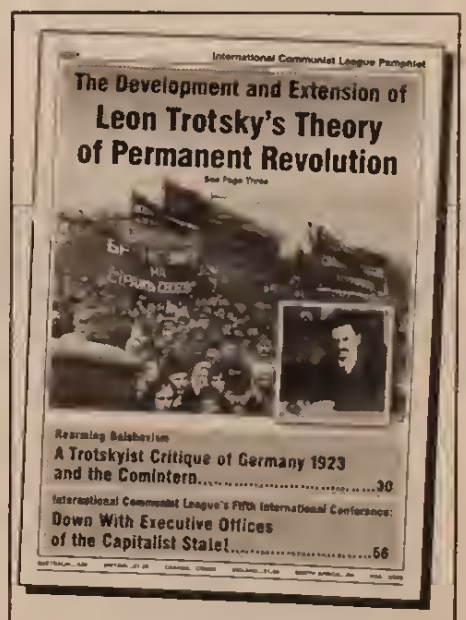
# On Evan Emory Article

25 April 2011

Hello, Spartacist League,

I wanted to express thanks for your excellent article titled "Michigan Bigots Hate YouTube, Sex, Children" (*Workers Vanguard*, 25 April). It is in keeping with the many articles you have published over the years expressing your sensible support for consensual sex and opposition to state meddling in private matters where it has no business sticking its nose in. The tone too of your article is commendable—anger and outrage, rather than a mere pro-forma expression of principles. When it comes to such questions, the hypocrisy of the ruling class is boundless, especially in view of the barbarism of its domestic and foreign policies. Kudos!

David Thorstad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AFP

Der Spiegel

**Left: Palestinians expelled from their homes in Haifa, 1948. Right: Amman, Jordan, in 1970 as King Hussein's regime slaughtered 10,000 Palestinians in Black September massacre.**

# Near East...

*(continued from page 7)*

mass slaughter of the war, the imperialists divvied up the loot. There was a sense of unity between the Arabs of Palestine, including what is today Jordan, and the Arabs of what is now Syria and Lebanon. They were divided into separate countries. In what is now Iraq, Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims and Kurds and Turkmens wanted to live separately. They were forced to live together. The point was to carve up the region in such a way that ethnic and religious strife would perpetually plague it. This new Near East was duly approved by the League of Nations, which Lenin called a "den of thieves." It served, as the United Nations does today, as a fig leaf for imperialist interests.

Even before WWI was finished, the British and French imperialists divided up the spoils of their impending victory in the secret Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916. The publication of that document by the Soviet workers state exposed the imperialists' machinations and had an electrifying effect across the region. The Bolshevik Revolution, and its extension to largely Muslim Central Asia in the course of the bloody three-year Russian Civil War [1918-20] against the imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary White armies, triggered a series of national revolts and popular uprisings in the Near East, which was occupied by the British and French imperialists from Egypt through the Fertile Crescent to Iran. In Egypt, as strikes and demonstrations swept the country in 1919, one observer reported that "news of success or victory by the Bolsheviks" in the Russian Civil War "seems to produce a pang of joy and content among all classes of Egyptians." Also in 1919, open rebellion broke out in the Punjab in India; hundreds were shot down by British troops. The same war criminal Winston Churchill wrote to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs at the time, "The ruin of Lenin and Trotsky and the system they embody is indispensable to the peace and revival of the world." I hope you have gathered by now that imperialist "peace" is anything but peace.

In this climate of social upheaval coming off WWI, Communist Parties were formed in Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Persia, which is Iran today. However, the working class in the Near East at that time was small and the Communist Parties were politically inexperienced. So as a result of both internal weaknesses and external repression, most of these parties had effectively disappeared by the late 1920s.

By the time Communist Parties reemerged in those countries beginning in the mid 1930s, the now-Stalinized Communist International had long since ceased to be an instrument for world socialist revolution. The defeat of the German revolution in 1923, which was a decisive factor in the isolation of the Soviet Union, and the virtual exclusion of the Trotskyist Left Opposition at the rigged Thirteenth Party Conference in January 1924, which coincided with Lenin's death, marked the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor. This was the period in which

National Geographic

**British troops enter Baghdad, March 1917. Near East was carved up by British and French imperialists after defeat of Ottoman Empire in WWI.**

political power was usurped from the proletarian vanguard by a conservative bureaucratic caste whose chief spokesman was Stalin.

The Stalinist bureaucracy repudiated the Bolshevik program of international socialist revolution in adopting the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country." This was a flat denial of the Marxist understanding that a socialist society could only be built on an international basis, through the destruction of capitalist imperialism as a world system and the establishment of a world socialist division of labor. Under Stalin's rule, the Communist International was transformed from an instrument for world proletarian revolution into a border guard against imperialist attacks on the Soviet Union. The program and strategy that ensued was class collaborationism, which, following the triumph of Hitlerite fascism, was codified by 1935 as "the people's front against fascism." In the colonial world in the lead-up to World War II [1939-45], the Stalinist Communist Parties were transformed into open supporters of the "democratic" imperialists who oppressed the worker and peasant masses.

A series of Arab nationalist regimes came to power coming off the defeat in the 1948 War with Israel, which had thoroughly discredited the imperialist-backed Arab regimes. Arab nationalists used Israel as an external enemy to direct the masses' anger and frustrations away from their own capitalist oppressors. We defend the Palestinians against the Zionist rulers and their U.S. backers and we also defend them against the Arab capitalist rulers who have played their own bloody part in subjugating and massacring the besieged Palestinian population spread throughout the region. We will not forget the Black September massacre of 10,000 Palestinians by the Jordanian monarchy in 1970. Over and over again history has shown that the Arab bourgeois states are no less an enemy of Palestinian liberation than the Zionist rulers.

Support to Arab nationalism by the Stalinist Communist Parties has led to the bloody defeat of workers movements throughout the Near East, not least in Egypt. Nasser, a bourgeois nationalist, came to power in 1952 with the support of the Egyptian Stalinists. He sought to appeal to the U.S. but was rebuffed, so he turned to the Soviet degenerated workers state for financial, military and political aid. Upon coming to power, Nasser sought to crush the combative Egyptian working class, which was heavily influenced by the Communist Party. But even as he was imprisoning, torturing and killing Communists, the Communist Party continued to support Nasser, liquidating into his Arab Socialist Union in 1965.

Behind this abject capitulation was the Stalinist schema of "two-stage revolution," which meant postponing the socialist revolution to an indefinite future while in the first "democratic" stage the proletariat is subordinated to an allegedly anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie. But history shows that the "second stage" consists of killing communists and massacring workers. From the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 and Spain in 1936-37 to Iran and Iraq in the 1950s and Indonesia in 1965-66, two-stage revolution has been a recipe for bloody defeats for the working class. [See the Spartacus Youth League pamphlet *The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited*, 1975.]

Millions of workers who looked to the Communist Parties for leadership in these countries were betrayed by their Stalinist misleaders. In Egypt, such betrayal was sold as support for Nasser's "Arab Socialism." But "Arab Socialism" was a myth. What it amounted to was capitalism with heavy state investment. The role Nasser saw for the workers was captured by his statement, "The workers don't demand; we give." To curb the combative proletariat, Nasser instituted several reforms, raising wages and reducing unemployment. Eventually, state investment dried up and there was no longer much to "give." But these reforms created strong illusions in Nasser, which are still prevalent today.

Nasser's hand-picked successor, Anwar el-Sadat, brought Egypt fully into the fold of American imperialism in the '70s. After Sadat came to power, the Communist Party sought to reorganize. Sadat responded by unleashing the Muslim Brotherhood to effectively crush them. He expelled Soviet advisers and instituted the "open door" policy of economic liberalization, cutting food and other subsidies. Mubarak and his neoliberal program of mass privatizations took this further and deeper. Contrary to popular illusions, Mubarak did not represent a break from Nasserism, rather its legacy. Under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak, Egypt remained subjugated to the imperialist world market and its dictates. The real difference between Nasser and Mubarak is that while Nasser was a genuinely popular bonapartist ruler, Mubarak was widely despised.

## Israel and Palestine

Now I want to talk some about the Israel/Palestine question, which is also key to understanding this region. Earlier I mentioned the 1948 War, which resulted in the consolidation of the state of Israel, a creation that arose out of the intersection of the Nazi Holocaust and the dissolution of the British Empire. The expulsion of nearly a million Arabs from Palestine—most of them to squalid refugee camps where they and their descendants live to this day—was also accompanied by a mass migration, which was driven by both the Arab regimes and the Zionists, of the so-called Oriental or Sephardic Jewish population from the Arab countries to Israel. We defend the national rights of the dispossessed Palestinian people against the Zionist butchers and demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all Israeli troops and fascistic settler auxiliaries from the Occupied Territories. But we do not thereby deny the right of the Hebrew-speaking nation to exist.

Under capitalism, when two peoples lay claim to the same land—and in this case a very small sliver of land—the right of self-determination can be exercised only by the stronger national grouping driving out, oppressing or destroying the

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weaker one. This is what Israel, backed by tons of aid from the U.S., does to the Palestinians. In such cases, the only way to assure the right of national self-determination for both peoples lies in overturning capitalist rule and instituting the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the only class that has no interest in perpetuating national antagonisms. We fight to break the Hebrew-speaking workers from the poison of Zionist chauvinism and we fight to break Arab workers from the sway of petty-bourgeois nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism.

To have a future free of bloodshed, what is necessary is Hebrew and Arab workers revolution against the murderous Israeli capitalist rulers and all the Arab regimes. We do not pretend that this will be easy, but it is historically possible and necessary. While there are certainly not many cracks in the Zionist citadel today, it is nonetheless a class-divided society. Some 25 percent of its citizens, disproportionately Arabs, live in poverty, and income disparities are higher in Israel than in Egypt or Jordan. Sephardic Jews, though overwhelmingly under the ideological sway of right-wing and religious parties, suffer widespread discrimination and poverty.

Our Leninist program advocates the right of all nations to self-determination, that is, the right to form independent nation-states, which is a basic democratic right. We do not make a distinction on this point between oppressed nations, which get the right to exist, and oppressor nations, which, according to some, do not. There is a widely held position that all Jews in Israel today represent an "occupation." There is a group called the League for the Revolutionary Party that is active at CCNY. They are crass apologists for Arab nationalism. They argue an idea that is widespread on the left that there are "good" people, that is, the oppressed —one could say the "occupied" people— and "bad" people who are the oppressors and do not even have the right to exist. To speak of an "occupation" as a whole implies that the programmatic consequence is "get rid of them," which has its own genocidal logic. In contrast to petty-bourgeois moralism, we advance a revolutionary internationalist solution in which all peoples have a right to exist.

When I was growing up as an Israeli American kid, I was taught by my parents all about the Holocaust, the horrific experiences my grandparents had gone through, and that no matter where Jews went in the world the only safe place free from persecution was Israel. In essence, I was taught that I was part of the oppressed people, and I was viewed that way in school. Actually, in ninth grade I had this terrible science teacher who made us get into groups by race. I didn't want to stand with the white kids because, of course, they were oppressor peoples, and I didn't know what to do. Then a black student who I was friends with said, "She's from Israel and that's near Africa so she's standing with us." And that's what I did. I stood with the black students. A year or so later, I became best friends with an Egyptian student who, along with her brother, shattered my world by informing me that Israel was oppressing the Palestinians. So, I had gone pretty quickly from the "oppressed" peoples to the "oppressor" peoples. Learning the truth about what was happening to the Palestinians—that the Zionist rulers' mentality toward the Palestinians is like the Nazis' mentality toward the Jews—changed my whole view of the world. But it was only the Marxist program that decisively enabled me to break from the poison of bourgeois nationalism, which is very deeply ingrained in the consciousness of this region.

Humbert-Droz Archives

**Najiya Hanum, Turkish delegate to 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East in Soviet city of Baku, addresses struggle for women's emancipation in Muslim East.**

Heritage

**Soviet premier Khrushchev (left) with Egyptian bourgeois-nationalist leader Nasser, recipient of massive Soviet aid in late 1950s, 1960s.**

In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin argues that the revolutionary party must be a "tribune of the people," the defender of all the oppressed, not just the working class. That means defending the rights of oppressed minorities such as the Coptic Christians in Egypt. It means fighting for free abortion on demand. It means defending the rights of homosexuals against backwardness and religious and moralistic bigotry. And it means fighting anti-Semitism, which is rampant in Arab countries. Often the word "Jew" is used instead of "Zionist," and still prevalent are centuries-old anti-Semitic themes that the Jews are plotting world domination, the Jews are the embodiment of all evil, and so on.

Capitalist rule fuels these national, ethnic and religious divisions that drive the constant bloodshed that defines the Near East. Marxists seek to shift the axis of struggle from Israeli against Arab to class against class. We stand with Lenin, who wrote: "Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the 'most just,' 'purest,' most refined and civilized brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism" ["Critical Remarks on the National Question," October-December 1913]. This really differentiates us from the slew of other groups that falsely call themselves socialists.

## WWP, ISO Tail Arab Nationalism, Anti-Women Reaction

In contrast to our revolutionary program, which is based on and confirmed by the lessons of history, virtually the entire left internationally has offered nothing but empty cheerleading for the "Egyptian Revolution." This is exemplified by the Workers World Party [WWP] in the U.S., which, as the military took control of the country on February 11, headlined: "WWP Rejoices with the Egyptian People." In Egypt, the Revolutionary Socialists [RS] group, which is promoted by the International Socialist Organization [ISO, a group active at CCNY], issued a statement on February 1, in which the RS dissolved the power of the working class into the classless demand for "all power to the people" and the call for a "popular revolution." Left out of the statement is even the mention of the word "socialism." This same group also appeals to crass Egyptian nationalism, declaring, "Revolution must restore Egypt's independence, dignity and leadership in the region."

The RS also fosters suicidal illusions in the Muslim Brotherhood. They try to invest these clericalist forces with "anti-imperialist" credentials and have pursued alliances with them over several years. We know that, whether or not it is currently in a position to make a bid for power, the Muslim Brotherhood represents a deadly danger to the working class, the Coptic Christian minority, all secularists, gays and the brutally oppressed women of Egypt. This is the same Brotherhood that, following the 1948 War, incited mobs that pillaged Jewish businesses, burned synagogues and slaughtered dozens of Jews. Henri Curiel and other leaders of Egyptian Communism were targeted.

The growing influence of these same forces is rightly feared by women in the region, including in Tunisia, where, as a recent article in the *New York Times* [20 February] described: "Tensions mounted here last week when military helicopters and security forces were called in to carry out an unusual mission: protecting the city's brothels from a mob of zealots." Tunisian society is relatively secular in contrast to Egypt and other countries in North Africa and the Near East. For example, many women do not wear the veil and abortion laws are relatively liberal. While the imperialists have used the "war on terror" to prop up "secular" dictators like Ben Ali in Tunisia and Muharak in Egypt, in reality the imperialists have long fostered the growth of Islamic fundamentalism as a bulwark against Communism and even left-bourgeois nationalism. This is no less true of the Arab rulers, who brutally repress the fundamentalists with one hand while promoting them with the other. In a 1994 interview, Ben Ali himself stated, "To some extent fundamentalism was of our own making, and was at one time encouraged in order to combat the threat of communism. Such groups were fostered in the universities and elsewhere at that time in order to offset the communists and to strike a balance."

Now I want to end this talk with the woman question, as yesterday was International Women's Day. It is also around the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City, which caused the deaths of 146 garment workers, many of them immigrant Jewish women, who could not escape the burning building because the bosses had locked the doors to the stairwells.

Today in Egypt, women are a crucial part of the working class, where they have played a leading role in the strikes over the last decade, especially in the textile industry. One of the most dramatic of these was the December 2006 textile strike in Mahalla al-Kobra where more than 20,000 workers went out. It was the women workers who led the strike, walking out as the men continued working. They started chanting outside the plant, "Where are the men? Here are the women!" This had the intended effect, as the men joined them, launching one of the biggest strikes Egypt had seen in years.

At the same time, women's oppression really is at the heart of Egyptian society. Together with religion, it is rooted in the country's backwardness, which is reinforced by imperialist subjugation. Forty percent of all women in Egypt are illiterate. Although illegal, female genital mutilation is rampant and equally so among Muslims and Christians. According to the United Nations, 96 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone genital mutilation. Women who protested in Tahrir Square and elsewhere in Egypt were more often than not wearing the headscarf. More than 80 percent of women in Egypt wear the headscarf—not by law but by force of a social norm—which is much to the consternation of many of their mothers who courageously fought decades earlier to take it off.

As we wrote in a recent *WV* article, "The Egyptian woman may be the slave of slaves, but she is also a vital part of the very class that will lay the material basis for her liberation by breaking the chains of social backwardness and religious obscurantism through socialist revolution" ["Egypt: Military Takeover Props Up Capitalist Rule," *WV* No. 974, 18 February]. As Trotsky stressed in a 1924 speech, "Perspectives and Tasks in the East," "There will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker" [reprinted in *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 60, Autumn 2007].

When International Women's Day was celebrated on March 8, 1917, in Russia, women textile workers led a strike of more than 90,000 workers. This signaled the end of tsarist rule and the beginning of the Russian Revolution, which culminated months later in the seizure of power by the working class led by the Bolshevik Party. Today we stand in the communist tradition of the Bolshevik Party and for workers rule from Egypt to the U.S. Join us!■

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Danny Lyon

Spartacist

**Left: SNCC leader Willie Ricks speaking on street in Atlanta, Georgia, winter 1963-64. Right: Spartacists at mid 1960s civil rights demonstration in New York City.**

# Civil War...

*(continued from page 5)*

programs and members of the entourage of local black Democratic politicians.

The Black Panthers represented the best of a generation of black activists who courageously stood up to the racist ruling class and its kill-crazy cops. They scared the ruling class. In 1968, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover vowed, "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries." This was a blunt statement which was soon put into effect! Under the ruthless COINTELPRO government program, 38 Panthers were assassinated and hundreds were railroaded to jail. It is not an accident that the 17 class-war prisoners who receive Partisan Defense Committee stipends include three who are framed-up former Black Panthers: Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost political prisoner, brilliant journalist known as the "Voice of the Voiceless," whose freedom we have fought for over many years; as well as Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa.

Unfortunately, the Panthers, along with most of the New Left, rejected the organized working class as the agent of black freedom and socialist revolution. The Panthers looked to black ghetto youth as the vanguard of black struggle. The underlying ideology of the Panthers was that the most oppressed are the most revolutionary. But, in fact, the lumpenproletariat in the ghetto, removed from the means of production, has no real social power. On another level, despite a lot of very dedicated black women members, the Panthers partook of the black nationalists' contempt for women. From Stokely Carmichael's gross statement about the position of women in the movement being "prone," to Eldridge Cleaver's rantings about "pussy power," to Farrakhan, the nationalists seek to keep women "in their place," often opposing birth control and abortion as genocide. We stand for free abortion on demand and women's liberation through socialist revolution.

WV Photo

**Spartacist League/Labor Black League built October 1999 NYC labor/black mobilization against KKK.**

As we later wrote in the SL/U.S. Programmatic Statement [November 2000] about black nationalism in all its diverse political expressions: "At bottom black nationalism is an expression of hopelessness stemming from defeat, reflecting despair over prospects for integrated class struggle and labor taking up the fight for black rights. The chief responsibility for this lies on the shoulders of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, which has time and again refused to mobilize the social power of the multiracial working class in struggle against racist discrimination and terror." And, I would add, today refuses to mobilize class-struggle resistance against the increased immiseration of the entire working class in the midst of the worst depression since the 1930s! We say: Break with the Democrats, for a revolutionary workers party! For a class-struggle leadership of the unions!

## A Proletarian Revolutionary Perspective

The last 30-some years have consisted of all-out union-busting, a determined, and so far successful, effort to drive down the real standard of living for the working class and roll back many of the gains of the civil rights movement. To the extent that schools were ever desegregated, they are now being resegregated and are as "separate and unequal" as ever. The big advance is that the really segregated schools are named for Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks. Under Obama, "school reform" amounts to a massive assault on public education carried out through brass-knuckle attacks on teachers unions.

Higher education is becoming a privilege of the rich, with massive fee hikes. I saw more black students at the University of California when I was a student than I do now. Obama may intone that this country has come "90 percent of the way" to ending racism. Perhaps for the very thin layer of black people, like Obama and Oprah Winfrey, who benefited from the civil rights movement, got high governmental posts or made millions of dollars, it looks that way. But for the vast majority of black people, day-to-day life has gotten a lot worse!

Then there is government repression: the "war on drugs," which is a war on black people; the "war on terror," which is a war on civil liberties; three-strikes laws; mass incarceration of blacks and Latinos; mass deportations of immigrants; FBI harassment and grand jury subpoenas against Midwest leftists; the jailing of radical lawyer Lynne Stewart for ten years; the Muslim Student Union at UC Irvine up on criminal charges for interrupting the speech of the Israeli ambassador; in L.A., outrageous criminal charges against nonviolent acts of civil disobedience in support of immigrant and workers' rights. The Obama administration has one-upped the Bush administration in its war on civil liberties, and that takes some doing!

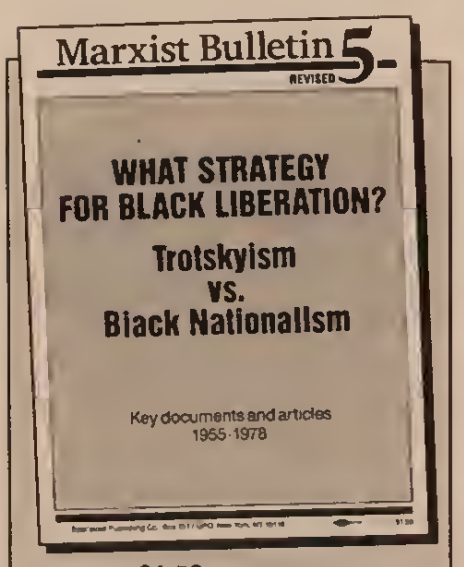
A liberal columnist writing in the *Los Angeles Times* (12 February) commented, "From the hysterical reaction of two local prosecutors, you'd think Southern California suddenly had become Paris in 1848—or, maybe, contemporary Cairo." I wish! But parochial as it is, beaten down as it is, the working class of this country is part of the international proletariat and has and will respond to struggles around the world.

America's capitalist rulers need their witchhunts as a means to keep those consigned to the bottom of this society "in their place." Above all, they must suppress the social power of the multiracial working class, for in its hands lies the potential to end the barbarism of capitalist exploitation. Workers have the power to stop the wheels of industry and, through socialist revolution, to reorganize society with a planned socialist economy.

The American labor bureaucracy has certainly done a stellar job for the bosses in selling out and holding down class struggle for a very long three decades. So today we meet young people who are interested in Marxism but have never seen a picket line. But capitalism produces class and social struggle by its very nature and by the contradictions inherent in it, often where we least expect it and whether the labor bureaucracy likes it or not. I certainly did not expect that the Near East and North Africa would explode this year. Nor did I expect that there would be mass marches of workers in Wisconsin, of all places, albeit still very much under the sway of the Democrats and bourgeois pressure politics. You can certainly see the anger of the U.S. working class and the contradictions building. Long periods of passivity followed by explosive class struggle is actually sort of a norm for the American working class.

What we can and must do now is develop a multiracial and multiethnic cadre that can lead such struggles in the future when the working class moves into action. We need a revolutionary proletarian party based on the understanding that the workers share no common cause with their imperialist masters. You will not get this understanding from labor misleaders or the reformist left, endlessly pushing lesser-evilism and the lie that the capitalists can be made to change their priorities through a little protest and pressure. After all, lesser-evilism just means that when the Democrats get into office, they can do greater evil with lesser resistance! You're certainly not going to get a Marxist program from groups like the International Socialist Organization, which shows its true colors by having victory parties for Obama's election when they're not busy prettifying the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

In conclusion, we fight to build a multiracial workers party that will champion the cause of all the exploited and oppressed in the fight for a socialist America and world. Only then can the wealth produced by labor be deployed for the benefit of society as a whole, laying the basis for eradicating all inequalities based on class, race, sex and national origin. We urge you to join us in the struggle for international proletarian revolution. ■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# War on Terror...

*(continued from page 2)*

history in its obituary of bin Laden. But what really caught our eye was the following editorial gem from the International Socialist Organization (ISO):

> "One inconvenient truth you won't hear much about in the media's celebration of bin Laden's death is the fact that the U.S. government helped him form al-Qaeda.
>
> "When the former USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the U.S. saw an opportunity to turn the country into a battlefield in the Cold War....
>
> "The U.S. ignored progressive and secular forces in Afghanistan, instead funneling support to fundamentalist groups that were not only anticommunist, but notorious for their brutality.... These were the rebels who Ronald Reagan praised as 'freedom fighters'."
>
> —*Socialist Worker* online, 3 May

An inconvenient truth that you are definitely unlikely to hear from the ISO is that these anti-communist social democrats were themselves firmly in the camp of Washington's "freedom fighters," howling along with the imperialists that the Soviets should get out of Afghanistan. When the Kremlin bureaucracy announced in 1988 that it was pulling out the Soviet troops, the ISO wrote that "we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988). For Trotskyists, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan was a ***historic betrayal*** that paved the way to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union itself, which the ISO, true to form, hailed as well.

WV Photo

**April 1989: At Washington, D.C., abortion rights demonstration, PDC raised funds for victims of U.S.-backed Islamic reactionaries.**

As for bin Laden, after having joined hands with the U.S. in the "holy war" against Communism, he became incensed by the deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia during the 1991 "Operation Desert Storm" against Iraq. Al Qaeda went on to launch a series of attacks on U.S. facilities overseas, setting the stage for 11 September 2001.

### Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Socialist Revolution!

In a starry-eyed response to the killing of bin Laden, Phyllis Bennis of the liberal Institute for Policy Studies wrote in a May 2 article titled "Justice or Vengeance?":

> "The president's speech last night could have aimed to put an end to the triumphalism of the 'global war on terror' that George W. Bush began and Barack Obama claimed as his own. It could have announced a new U.S. foreign policy based on justice, equality, and respect for other nations. But it did not....
>
> "It's ineffably sad that President Obama, in his claim that bin Laden's death means justice, didn't use the opportunity to announce the end of the deadly U.S. wars that answered the attacks of 9/11. This could have been a moment to replace vengeance with cooperation, replace war with justice."

It is not surprising that the ISO reproduced this piece on its Web site without comment. For years, the ISO, the Workers World Party (WWP), the Party for Socialism and Liberation and others tried to build an "antiwar movement" whose basic premise was "Anybody but Bush" in the White House. The plain fact is that the Obama White House has, as promised, carried on and escalated the "war on terror" initiated under George W. Bush, causing some consternation among the ISO, WWP and other opportunist groups that had celebrated Obama's election.

Writing in the *New York Times* (8 May), conservative columnist Ross Douthat observed that the killing of bin Laden "operationalized Bush's famous 'dead or alive' dictum" and highlighted the continuity in foreign policy under both Republicans and Democrats. Citing the war in Libya, the escalating drone strikes in Pakistan and the "policy of targeted assassination" of U.S. citizens, Douthat wrote:

> "Imagine, for a moment, that these were George W. Bush's policies at work.... Imagine the outrage, the protests, the furious op-eds about right-wing tyranny and neoconservative overreach. Imagine all that, and then look at the reality. For most Democrats, what was considered creeping fascism under Bush is just good old-fashioned common sense when the president has a 'D' beside his name."

In truth, Democratic politicians barely worked up a whimper in protest against the foreign adventures of the Bush gang, while the reformists' "antiwar" movement dissipated more and more the closer it got to the 2008 elections. Sowing the illusion that the Democrats in office could be pressured to carry out a humanitarian foreign policy and to meet the needs of working people at home, the reformists serve, to the extent their forces allow, to reinforce the ties binding workers, minorities and youth to the other party of U.S. imperialism.

For the working class to take the offensive against the depredations of its rulers—at home and abroad—will require a new leadership, a workers party of the Bolshevik type that fights for a workers government. Our task is to build such a party in the "belly of the beast" of U.S. imperialism, to fight for the only answer to exploitation, repression and imperialist war: international socialist revolution.■

# Connecticut...

*(continued from page 12)*

McDowell and Kelley Williams-Bolar not as criminals, but as people trying to do right by their kids against a system that considers them expendable.

Around the country, working-class parents—black, white, immigrant—try by one means or another to get their kids into the few decent schools in the rotting public education system. In San Francisco alone, the parents of some 300 children were forced to pay up to $5,000 for bending the rules. The grotesque persecution of Kelley Williams-Bolar and Tanya McDowell sends a special message to the overwhelming majority of black people, forcibly segregated at the bottom of this capitalist society, of what's in store for them if they try to break their kids out of their assigned ghetto schools. The old Jim Crow laws enforcing formal segregation are gone. But in their place are regulations like residency requirements for public schools that serve the same purpose. Segregation is enforced by the racist courts and cops, like the ones who prowl the leafy streets of Connecticut's WASP villages looking for "out of place" black drivers. Even minimal steps to redress school segregation, such as school busing, were long ago abandoned by the ruling class.

Four of Connecticut's urban areas are among the top ten in the nation in growth in income inequality, according to a Federal Reserve Bank of Boston study of 1989-2004. And as night follows day, Connecticut has one of the biggest achievement gaps between black and white students of any state in the U.S.

Residency requirements combined with education funding based on local property and other taxes guarantee that richer kids will get good schools and poor kids will be isolated in lousy ones, especially in the ghettos and barrios. At bottom, the capitalists see no reason to throw money at educating the mass of black and Latino youth, whom they write off as a "surplus" layer with no prospect of getting jobs requiring any kind of skills. During the first year of the current economic crisis, there were almost ***one million*** homeless schoolchildren in America. Year after year, minority youth are put through crumbling schools that mainly serve to "train" them for a future in prison.

"We can't spend our way out of it," Barack Obama told the *Today* show last fall. In fact, the capitalist class that Obama represents has starved public schools of funding for years. And the Obama administration has waged war against the teachers unions, which cynically are blamed for the woeful state of the public schools. Massive doses of money—for teachers, books, computers, repairs—would be a start in redressing this situation. There is an urgent need for free, quality, integrated education for all; for decent, integrated housing; for jobs for all! But as we wrote in "Obama's War on Public Education" (*WV* No. 967, 22 October 2010):

> "Like the fight for decent health care, the battle for quality education, including bilingual instruction, for the working class and the black and Latino poor requires hard struggle against the capitalist class, a tiny handful of people whose obscene wealth is gained from exploiting labor and whose rule is reinforced by racial and other forms of social oppression. The money and resources exist for massive construction of schools, hospitals and other infrastructure gutted by the profit-bloated capitalists. To seize that wealth requires breaking the power of the bourgeoisie through socialist revolution."

When the multiracial working class is in power, it will replace the rotting structure of capitalist property relations with a planned economy that can provide jobs and decent living conditions for all. To get there, we need to build a revolutionary workers party that will champion the cause of all those who have been thrown on capitalism's scrap heap.■

# Canadian Elections...

*(continued from page 3)*

> against the capitalist rulers, not into chauvinism and nationalism."
>
> —*Spartacist Canada* No. 160, Spring 2009

"Canadian unity" nationalism is particularly promoted in the labour movement by the NDP, which, for example, upholds the Clarity Act, a law effectively outlawing Quebec's democratic right to self-determination, i.e., to independence. This serves to drive Québécois workers into the arms of their own class enemies, represented by the bourgeois-nationalist Bloc and Parti Québécois. Only by championing the national rights of the oppressed Québécois can Marxists lay a basis for winning the Quebec workers to a perspective of internationalist class struggle.

### Down With Canadian Nationalism! For an Internationalist Revolutionary Workers Party!

Labour's capacity to fight the capitalists' attacks is hamstrung by the union misleaders who tie workers to the so-called "national interests" of capitalist Canada and promote the NDP and even the Liberals (or in Quebec, the Bloc and PQ) as "progressive." Canadian Auto Workers leader Ken Lewenza, who two years ago agreed to unprecedented wage and benefit cuts at Chrysler and General Motors, perfectly epitomizes these labour traitors. Today, Lewenza's "defense" of unions consists of convincing the capitalist class that unions are really in ***their*** interests because they "play a constructive and valuable economic role" in negotiating cutbacks "which share the pain and preserve needed jobs" (*National Post*, 9 April). To Lewenza, the unions are a bulwark against struggles that might challenge this system. Without unions, he broods, "Who knows where and how the simmering fury of exploited, poor people would then bubble up?"

These misleaders—agents of the ruling class inside the workers movement—must be thrown off. The fight to rebuild the trade unions as instruments of proletarian struggle is closely tied to the need for a multiracial, binational revolutionary workers party. That requires, above all, a political struggle against the social-democratic NDP and for a new class-struggle leadership of the unions. Against the bourgeoisie, which manipulates all manner of racism and bigotry in order to poison class struggle, such a party will be a genuine tribune of the people, fighting to defend the rights of minorities and immigrants, and championing the struggle for women's liberation.

The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) and the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada, two remnants of Canadian Stalinism, are also running candidates in this election. Both parties are notorious for their promotion of Canadian nationalism, from protectionist calls for Canadian-owned industry, to the CPC's call for an "independent Canadian foreign policy." It is a *lie* that Canadian capitalists are better than American (or Japanese or German), or that protectionist tariffs and a Canadian boss will protect jobs and stop plant closures. Such nationalist schemes retard united, internationalist class struggle, pitting workers in this country against their class brothers and sisters abroad. While opposing the NATO attack on Libya, these Stalinist-nationalists propound the worst illusions that capitalist Canada can be pressured to be a force for "peace." Neither draws even a crude class line against the bourgeoisie; thus they merit not even the most critical support from class-conscious workers.

There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialized economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and imperialist war. It is to this end that the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste devotes all our resources.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

## Sheer Racist Depravity

# Homeless Mom Faces 20 Years for Putting Kid in Good School

## Connecticut

It was a crime to teach slaves to read in the Old South. Today, 150 years after the opening shots of the Civil War, it is still considered a crime to try to get a decent education for a poor black child. Tanya McDowell, a black homeless mother, was arrested on April 14 for enrolling her five-year-old son, Andrew Justin Patches, in kindergarten in Norwalk, Connecticut. Because she was not considered a Norwalk resident, McDowell is accused of "stealing" the public school's services. She faces up to ***20 years*** in prison on felony charges of first-degree larceny and having to pay "restitution" of over $15,000. We demand that these outrageous charges be dropped!

The racist persecution of McDowell is shot through with Kafkaesque cruelty. Apparently police were tipped off by a lawyer for the Norwalk Housing Authority as it was evicting McDowell's babysitter from her housing project. The babysitter's "crime" was to permit the homeless mother to use her address, which allowed McDowell to register Andrew at the Brookside Elementary School. Although McDowell alternately stays in a Norwalk emergency shelter, a van or a friend's house, Norwalk authorities officially considered her a resident of Bridgeport, a wasteland of boarded-up brick factories populated by impoverished former workers. This is the real crime in the eyes of the bourgeois Norwalk city fathers: Tanya McDowell and her son actually tried *to get out* of Bridgeport's rotten schools instead of staying "in their place." What's next: pass laws like in apartheid South Africa?

The Hour

**April 27: Tanya McDowell speaking outside state superior court in Norwalk.**

The mere mention of Bridgeport evokes disdainful shudders in nearby Darien, New Canaan and other manicured enclaves of Fairfield County's Gold Coast, home to some of the wealthiest tax dodgers, Wall Street financial manipulators and profit-drenched exploiters in the world. These types got a big bailout, thanks to Barack Obama, after their fraudulent schemes helped dump the country into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. In the *New Haven Advocate* (27 April), Nick Keppler commented ironically that "there's one shifty cheat, lying low in a land saturated by financial intrigue, who must repay what her scheme cost society": a homeless person in trouble over "tricky paperwork and the bending of legalities" who "does not warrant a bailout."

Tanya McDowell's arrest is part of the brutal enforcement of racial inequality by the government, from Washington, D.C., down to the smallest one-cop town. Only a few months ago, black mother Kelley Williams-Bolar of Akron, Ohio, was convicted of the same "crime" (see "Black Mother Jailed for Getting Kids into Decent School," *WV* No. 977, 1 April). The great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who escaped slavery, said that in the eyes of the slaveholders, to educate a man "would forever unfit him to be a slave." We recognize mothers like Tanya

*continued on page 11*

## Federal Appeals Court Orders New Sentencing Hearing

# Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent—Free Him Now!

On April 26, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit turned down for a second time the Philadelphia district attorney's appeal to reinstate the death penalty for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a supporter of Philadelphia MOVE and a former Black Panther who was railroaded to death row in 1982 for a crime he did not commit. The court ordered the state of Pennsylvania to convene a new sentencing hearing within 180 days solely to determine whether Mumia should be resentenced to death or remain in prison for life. The Philadelphia D.A. intends to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court. Mumia, who has been in prison over half his life, remains on death row.

The Third Circuit ruling came in response to a January 2010 order by the U.S. Supreme Court to consider reinstating Mumia's death sentence, which had been overturned in 2001. While the new ruling removes the threat of an immediate reimposition of the death sentence, it provides no justice for Mumia, a political prisoner who should never have spent a day in prison. His conviction for the 1981 killing of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner was based on lying testimony extorted by the cops, a "confession" manufactured by the police and prosecutors and phony ballistics "evidence." His death sentence was secured after prosecutors cited political statements he made as a teenage leader of the Philadelphia Black Panthers. The courts have steadfastly refused to hear the overwhelming evidence of Mumia's innocence, including Arnold Beverly's confession that he was the one who shot and killed Faulkner (see the 2007 Partisan Defense Committee fact sheet "*Murdered by Mumia*: Big Lies in the Service of Legal Lynching").

At issue in the Third Circuit ruling are the sentencing form and jury instructions at Mumia's 1982 "trial," which, the court ruled, did not allow jurors to freely consider mitigating circumstances weighing against a death sentence. While this ruling went against the prosecution, those fighting for Mumia's freedom must have no illusions in the "fairness" of a legal system that has conspired against Mumia since Day One of his ordeal. The 2001 decision by federal judge William Yohn that overturned Mumia's death sentence simultaneously upheld every aspect of his frame-up conviction. As for the Supreme Court, its 2009 decision summarily turning down Mumia's petition to overturn his conviction essentially put an end to his legal efforts to win freedom, consigning him to execution or life in prison hell.

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, which first took up Mumia's case in 1987, have always supported the use of every possible legal avenue available to Mumia while fighting against illusions in the courts of the capitalist class enemy. Our fight has centered on the need for mass protest based on the power of the working class in the U.S. and internationally—the one force with the social power to give pause to the capitalists' legal lynching machine. When Mumia faced a death warrant in the summer of 1995, worldwide protests that included trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers played a crucial role in staying the executioner's hand.

The cops, courts and prosecutors have never let up in their vendetta against Mumia, an award-winning journalist renowned for his searing exposés of cop brutality and racist oppression. Seeking to spike early efforts on Mumia's behalf, two decades ago a Philly Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) leader railed that Mumia's supporters were "a misfit terrorist group" that deserved the "electric couch." In 1995 a mob of cops screaming for Mumia's execution besieged Philadelphia hospital workers union Local 1199C, which had dared to rent its hall for a fundraiser for

WV Photo

Mumia. Just last month, the F.O.P. lashed out at the American Federation of Teachers after its California state affiliate passed a resolution denouncing Mumia's continued imprisonment and calling for the courts to hear the evidence of his innocence.

In seeking to execute this innocent man, the capitalist rulers are sending a message to the working class and all who would fight against exploitation, oppression and imperialist war that they, too, are in the state's gun sights. The fight to free Mumia, as with all struggles against racial oppression, can go forward only when they are based on a clear understanding of the class forces involved. ***Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!*** ■

WORKERS VANGUARD 50¢

No. 981 27 May 2011

# Israel "Celebrates" Founding by Slaughtering Palestinians Again

AP photos

May 15: Palestinian boy wounded when Israeli soldiers opened fire on protesters at Lebanese border (left); Zionist troops take aim at approaching demonstrators in Golan Heights (right).

## For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

In a wave of protests, thousands of Palestinians from Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank gathered at Israel's borders on May 15 to mark the "Nakba," or "catastrophe." This is what Palestinians call the anniversary of the founding of Israel in 1948 and the war with Arab states, when hundreds of thousands were driven from their homes and land—many to squalid refugee camps where they and their descendants live to this day. Israeli troops celebrated the anniversary in their own customary way by gunning down demonstrators, killing over a dozen and injuring scores more.

Ever since Israel was established in 1948 in accordance with a United Nations partition plan, Palestinians have been treated as *untermenschen* (subhuman), subjected to deadly cycles of war and terror, repeatedly robbed of their land and driven into ghetto-like enclaves. The drive for a "greater Israel" was inherent in the establishment of the Zionist state. Today, the entire West Bank, which Israel occupied along with the Gaza Strip as a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, is dotted with military outposts, checkpoints and fortified settlements. Zionist settlers repeatedly rampage in the West Bank. That area is crisscrossed by "bypass roads" that are off-limits to Palestinians, who are walled off in towns and villages where water and other necessities of life are scarce.

Two and a half years ago, the Zionist butchers—armed with U.S. warplanes, helicopters and missiles—slaughtered more than a thousand Palestinians and wounded thousands more in the Gaza ghetto. When a flotilla of volunteers carrying medicine, construction supplies and other goods defied the Israeli blockade of Gaza last year, elite naval units blasted away at the 700 passengers in international waters, killing nine people.

Workers internationally must take up the defense of the besieged Palestinian people and demand: ***All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights! For immediate removal of all anti-Arab fortifications! Down with the blockade of Gaza!***

### Obama Backs Zionist Terror

President Barack Obama last week repeated Washington's long-held position in favor of a supposed "two-state solution" in which the Palestinians would be granted a rump state consisting of Gaza and part of the West Bank. Obama proposed Israeli-Palestinian negotiations based on the borders existing before the 1967 war, supplemented with land "swaps." What that means was shown in secret documents released early this year (the so-called "Palestine Papers") revealing the details of years of such "negotiations." The documents describe how former Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni told Palestinian negotiators that land swaps should involve separating Arab villages from Israel and annexing them to an eventual Palestinian state. Tens of thousands of Arabs could lose their Israeli citizenship under this scheme.

In presenting the U.S. government's position, Obama used language that was meant to appeal to Arab audiences in the Near East and North Africa, a region that has been swept by a series of protests and uprisings. His particular choice of words enraged Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu as he was about to arrive in Washington for talks with the White House. The Israeli government insists that final control of the territory seized in 1967 must remain in the hands of Israel. This has long been the consensus of all bourgeois parties in Israel, including the Labor Party.

Obama then took the occasion of a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee—the main Zionist lobby—to reassure Tel Aviv that the U.S. would not waver in its support to Israel. The White House has made this clear by opposing a planned UN resolution in favor of a Palestinian state. To defend its interests in the oil-rich Near East, U.S. imperialism each year pumps some $3 billion in military aid to Israel and another $1.3 billion for Egypt's military, relying as well on the Saudi monarchy and the despots ruling the Persian Gulf states. ***Down with U.S. aid to Israel, Egypt!***

At the heart of the Palestinian question is the impossibility of achieving national justice for geographically interpenetrated peoples within a capitalist framework.

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A REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST HISTORY OF MAY DAY

See Page 4

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# Palestinian Trotskyists on the Partition of Palestine and the 1948 Arab-Israel War

Each May, as the Zionist rulers celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel, Palestinians across the Near East mark the *nakba*, or catastrophe: the expulsion in 1948 of more than 700,000 Arabs from their homeland in Palestine. The United Nations General Assembly had voted the previous year in favor of ending the British mandate in Palestine and creating two independent states, one Zionist and the other Palestinian Arab. Through mass killings and terror, the Zionists drove out most of the Palestinian population from their homes and villages. Following the declaration of the founding of the Israeli state in May 1948, a number of bourgeois Arab regimes intervened militarily, not to defend the Palestinians but to seize land that had been allotted to them under the UN partition plan.

AP

**1948: Palestinians in Ramle surrender to Zionist forces who would go on to expel them en masse.**

The small Palestinian Trotskyist group, the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), upheld the position of communist internationalism in the 1948 War between Israel and the Arab states. While recognizing the right of both the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian Arab peoples to national self-determination, the RCL resolutely opposed the imperialist-imposed partition and took a position of revolutionary defeatism toward both sides in the war. That position is today upheld by the International Communist League.

We reprint below an excerpted editorial, titled "Against the Stream," that was originally published in the RCL's Hebrew organ *Kol Ham'amad* (Voice of the Class). The English translation was published by the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in *Fourth International* (May 1948). The excerpts refer to Ernest Bevin, who was foreign minister in Britain's Labour Party government; Chaim Weitzmann (Weizmann), Israel's first president; and the Husseinis, a clan of Palestinian landowners and political leaders.

* * *

Politicians and diplomats are still trying to find a formula for the disastrous situation into which Palestine has been plunged by the UNO [United Nations Organization] deciding upon partition. Is this a "breach of international peace" or are we dealing with merely "hostile acts"? As far as we are concerned there is no point in this distinction. We are daily witnessing the killing or maiming of men and women, old and young, Jew or Arab. As always, the working masses and the poor suffer most.

Not so very long ago the Arab and Jewish workers were united in strikes against a foreign oppressor. This common struggle has been put to an end. Today the workers are being incited to kill each other. The inciters have succeeded....

"Keeping order" in Palestine costs England over 35 million Pounds a year, an amount which exceeds the profit she can extort from this country. Partition will release her from her financial obligations, enable her to employ her soldiers in the productive process while her source of income will remain intact. — But this is not all. By partition a wedge is driven between the Arab and Jewish worker. The Zionist state with its provocative lines of demarcation will bring about the blossoming forth of irredentist (revenge) movements on either side, there will be fighting for an "Arab Palestine" and for a "Jewish state within the historic frontiers of Eretz Israel (Israel's Land)." As a result, the chauvinistic atmosphere created thus will poison the Arab world in the Middle East and throttle the anti-imperialist fight of the masses, while Zionists and Arab feudalists will vie for imperialist favors....

If the Anglo-American imperialists had forced this "solution" on Palestine of their own, the rotten game would have been patent in the whole Arab East. However, they dodged: the "problem" was passed on to the UNO. The function of the UNO was to sweeten the bitter dish cooked in the imperialist cuisine, dressing it, in Bevin's words, with the twaddle of the "conscience of the world that has passed judgment." Exactly! And the diplomats of the lesser countries danced to the tune of the dollar flute, reiterating the "public opinion of the world." And the peculiar casts in this performance enabled Great Britain to appear as the Guardian Angel overflowing with sympathy for either side.

And the Soviet Union? Why did not her representatives call the UNO game the swindle it really is?—Apparently, the present foreign policy of the SU is not concerned with the fighting of the colonial masses. And as the Palestine question is a second-rate affair for the "Big," the

*continued on page 11*

## Editorial Note

# Shocking! There's Gambling in Rick's Café

Captain Renault announced that he was "shocked, shocked" to see gambling in Rick's café in the 1942 film *Casablanca*, as he pocketed his winnings for the evening. It was about as shocking to learn that the reformist-led "antiwar movement," which was premised on "Anybody but Bush" politics, plummeted following the Democratic Party's gains in the 2006 midterm elections and Obama's victory in 2008. Such were the conclusions of a recent study by Michael Heaney of the University of Michigan and Fabio Rojas of Indiana University titled, "The Partisan Dynamics of Contention: Demobilization of the Antiwar Movement in the United States, 2007-2009."

The authors conclude that the antiwar movement was essentially a movement of the Democratic Party and was dissolved once the Democrats won office. To readers of *Workers Vanguard*, these conclusions are hardly news. But at least they're now documented with numerous tables and graphs, packaged in excruciating acadamese.

Where once hundreds of thousands could be mobilized in protest against "Bush's war" in Iraq, today it takes a microscope to spot any opposition in the streets. In evaporating such opposition, the Democrats had the help of the reformist left, which promoted the lie that the imperialist rulers can be pressured to make their system more humane, peaceful and democratic. In fact, the bloodthirsty depredations of U.S. imperialism continue apace across the world under the Obama administration. U.S. troops still occupy Iraq; an intensified U.S./NATO war rages against the peoples of Afghanistan; U.S. drone strikes and special operations have escalated in Pakistan; the U.S. and NATO are bombing Libya on behalf of a pro-imperialist "opposition."

The data used in the Heaney/Rojas study were gleaned from Listservs managed by the now-defunct United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), the ANSWER Coalition, Code Pink, the World Can't Wait, MoveOn.org and the Washington Peace Center. The researchers maintained "personal relationships with leading activists," conducted interviews with some of them and surveyed attendees at some 27 events nationally. The study notes early on that "Obama maintained the occupation of Iraq and escalated the war in Afghanistan" and that the "antiwar movement should have been furious at Obama's 'betrayal' and reinvigorated its protest activity. Instead, attendance at antiwar rallies declined precipitously and financial resources available to the movement dissipated." The paper's conclusion reads in part:

> "The Democrats and the antiwar movement struck a useful alliance from 2003 to 2006. The antiwar movement helped to demonstrate grassroots support for a key party issue and the party helped to provide activists, resources, and legitimacy for the movement. By early 2009, however, it was abundantly clear that Democrats were no longer interested in this alliance."

The alliance certainly was useful for the Democrats. But then the authors continue: "Abandonment by the Democrats gave the movement the independence it desired, but also stripped it of its capacity for political influence. While Obama's election was heralded as a victory for the antiwar movement, Obama's election, in fact, thwarted the ability of the movement to achieve critical mass." This greatly prettifies the liberal and reformist left—the UFPJ; the ANSWER Coalition (once sponsored by the Workers World Party and now by its split organization, the Party for Socialism and Liberation); the World Can't Wait outfit, sponsored by the Revolutionary Communist Party; the International Socialist Organization, which participated in any number of such coalitions. These organizations never desired "independence" from the Democratic Party, whose fortunes they promoted.

Obama did not "betray" the reformist left. Rather, it was the reformists who betrayed the interests of the proletariat by chaining opponents of the Iraq and Afghanistan occupations to the capitalist Democratic Party, the other party of exploitation, oppression and war. From the outset, the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs called for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against U.S. imperialism and fought for class struggle at home against America's capitalist rulers. The bankruptcy of the reformist left was succinctly captured by then-Trotskyist James Burnham in his 1936 piece, "War and the Workers": "No one can uphold capitalism—whether directly, as an open adherent of the capitalists, or indirectly, from any shade of liberal or reformist position—and fight against war, because capitalism means war."■

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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# Hong Kong: Fake Trotskyists Hail Imperialist Running Dog Liu Xiaobo

It always seems that the more flagrant and bloody the depredations that the imperialists are engaged in, the louder they beat the drums over "human rights" wherever capitalism has been overthrown. In this vein, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton lashed out during high-level talks with Chinese representatives in Washington a few weeks ago. Referring to a renewed crackdown on dissidents, Clinton blustered that China's leaders are "trying to stop history, which is a fool's errand." Liberal editorial writers and columnists have done their assigned part by bashing China over "human rights." This at a time when the U.S. ruling class is carrying out murderous occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and bombing Libya, and the use of torture in the "war on terror" evokes only mild debate about just how effective it is.

A major focus of the recent clamor over "human rights" in China has been the imprisoned anti-Communist intellectual Liu Xiaobo. Especially after Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year, the Western bourgeois media glorified him as a stalwart champion of "democracy" and "human rights." A noteworthy exception was a piece in the liberal London *Guardian* (15 December 2010), which exposed him as a rabid supporter of U.S. imperialist militarism, past and present. Under the headline "Do Supporters of Nobel Winner Liu Xiaobo Really Know What He Stands For?" Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong commented:

> "If Liu's politics were well-known, most people would not favour him for a prize, because he is a champion of war, not peace. He has endorsed the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and he applauded the Vietnam and Korean wars retrospectively in a 2001 essay. All these conflicts have entailed massive violations of human rights. Yet in his article 'Lessons from the Cold War,' Liu argues that 'The free world led by the US fought almost all regimes that trampled on human rights.... The major wars that the US became involved in are all ethically defensible.' During the 2004 US presidential election, Liu warmly praised George Bush for his war effort against Iraq and condemned Democratic party candidate John Kerry for not sufficiently supporting the US's wars."

It is practically a requirement for those awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that they be imperialist war criminals (e.g., Henry Kissinger and Barack Obama) or toadies of the imperialists (e.g., the Dalai Lama).

Joining the imperialists in praising Liu are the pseudo-Trotskyists who publish *October Review* out of capitalist Hong Kong, the one part of the People's Republic of China (besides the tiny enclave of Macao) where the CCP does not exercise a monopoly of political organization. Describing this vocal apologist for American imperialist militarism as someone who "fought for democracy through peaceful means," *October Review* (31 December 2010) ran an article, headlined "Liu Xiaobo Must Be Released Now! Human Rights Must Be Restored in China!" that was suffused with the anti-Communist code words "human rights" and (classless) "democracy." "Liu being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize is also a criticism of Chinese authorities," we are informed, "hence it can be an encouragement for the development of the democratic movement in China." With the same language, the *Washington Post* (30 January 2009)—a major mouthpiece for American imperialism—hailed Liu's Charter 08 movement as China's "new democracy movement."

**2010 Nobel "Peace" Prize winner Liu Xiaobo (right) joins roster of imperialist toadies and war criminals like Henry Kissinger (below at right with U.S. president Nixon in 1972). Bottom: U.S. bombing during Vietnam War, one of many imperialist wars upheld by Liu.**

## "Human Rights" Imperialism Against China

Liu emerged as Washington's most favored Chinese anti-Communist "dissident" a little over two years ago as the primary author of the Charter 08 manifesto which, as we wrote at the time, was "an explicit program for capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese deformed workers state, wrapped in the envelope of 'democracy'" (*WV* No. 933, 27 March 2009). Charter 08 demanded the privatization of state-owned enterprises—the collectivized core of the Chinese economy—as well as agricultural land. This was a program to reverse the social gains of the 1949 Revolution, which, if realized, would plunge China back into imperialist subjugation and untrammeled exploitation. Not surprisingly, the organizations Liu has been involved in have been funded by the National Endowment for Democracy, a notorious CIA front.

While we recognized that Charter 08 represented a counterrevolutionary program, we did not support the repression of its initiators and signers by the Stalinist bureaucracy, which defends its privileged position through fierce, all-sided political repression. Liu and the other right-wing intellectuals were not and are not presently leading a movement threatening the existence of the Chinese workers state, as was the case, for example, with Solidarność in Poland in 1981. As revolutionary Marxists (Trotskyists), we called to "smash Solidarność counterrevolution" and fought to win Polish workers to a program of defense of the Polish and Soviet workers states against capitalist counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies.

In China today, that program is essential to politically defeat the Charter 08 movement and its apologists on the left, such as *October Review*. Charter 08 retrospectively supported the imperialist-backed Guomindang (Nationalist Party) regime of Chiang Kai-shek against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the civil war of the late 1940s. The 1949 Chinese Revolution was a progressive social revolution of world-historic significance. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been exploited from time immemorial. The creation of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for enormous social progress.

However, the revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's CCP regime, a nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Unlike the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the Bolshevik internationalism of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the Chinese Revolution was the result of peasant-guerrilla war led by Mao's Stalinist-nationalist forces. Patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy that had usurped power in the USSR, Mao and his successors, including today's Hu Jintao regime, have maintained the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. In practice, "socialism in one country" has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution, which is essential for the advance to socialism.

At some point, the explosive social tensions within China will shatter the political structure of the ruling bureaucratic caste. And when that happens, the fate of the most populous country in the world will be starkly posed: proletarian political revolution to establish a government based on elected workers and peasants councils and open the road to socialism, or capitalist enslavement and imperialist subjugation.

In their own way, China's Stalinist rulers sense that they are sitting atop a social volcano. This is clearly evident in their response to the mass protests that toppled Egyptian despot Hosni Mubarak. The state-directed television news showed pictures of protests from afar in which not a single demonstrator was visible. Instead they focused on broken windows at banks, trucks in flames and looting, accompanied by commentary about how the government was striving to restore order. In the wake of the political turbulence in North Africa, there has been increased suppression of dissent (arrests and detentions of activists, artists and lawyers as well as more Internet censorship).

For their part, elements in American ruling circles evidently saw an opportunity to encourage some Chinese intellectuals and other members of the educated (and materially privileged) petty bourgeoisie to take to the streets in the name of "democracy." This was labeled "the Jasmine revolution." Anti-Communist émigrés in the U.S., grouped around the Democratic Party of China, took to their computer keyboards and issued calls in cyberspace

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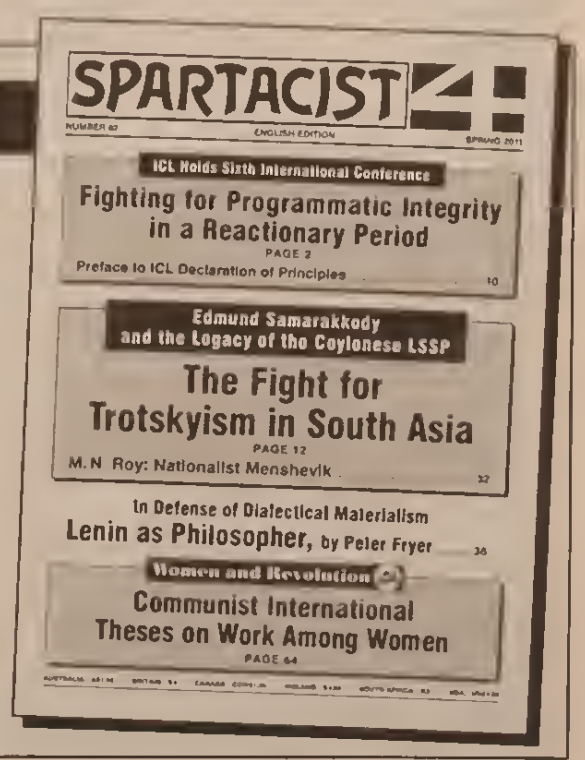


# A Revolutionary Marxist History of May Day

*The following is a presentation, edited for publication, given by comrade Jacob Zorn at a May 7 forum in New York City.*

Every year on the first of May, workers throughout the world celebrate May Day. Like International Women's Day in March, May Day originated in the heat of class struggle against the U.S. capitalist class, but it has not been celebrated in the United States for decades—that is, until several years ago, when tens of thousands of immigrants began demonstrating for immigrant rights.

The Spartacist League and the Spartacus Youth Clubs go to these May Day protests with our paper, *Workers Vanguard*, and the paper of our comrades in Mexico, *Espartaco*, to put forward our demand that the workers movement fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. We also raise our Marxist program of working-class independence in counterposition to the labor bureaucrats and liberals in the leadership of these protests: that the working class must struggle in its own interests, here and internationally, against the capitalists, and that the Democrats and other bourgeois politicians and their allies in the labor bureaucracy are enemies of the fight for workers emancipation.

In Europe and Latin America, celebrating on May Day is much more common. Yet the politics of these celebrations, as pushed by the social democrats, the trade-union bureaucrats and, in the semi-colonial world, bourgeois nationalists, obscure not only the origins of May Day but also its historic revolutionary political message. This forum will emphasize this revolutinnary heritage, based on the need for the working class internationally to make a socialist revolution, expropriate the capitalist parasites and create a society based on proletarian rule.

Paul J. Morand

**3 May 1886: Cops outside McCormick Harvester Machine plant in Chicago rampage against rally demanding eight-hour day, killing one worker.**

## The 1886 Haymarket Police Riot

For most people, the origins of May Day are synonymous with the Haymarket demonstration in Chicago on 4 May 1886, which took place amid a large struggle for an eight-hour day. In order to understand what happened in Haymarket Square 125 years ago, it's important to have a sense of this struggle in Chicago, which was largely organized by anarchist labor leaders August Spies and Albert Parsons, who would go on to become two of the Haymarket martyrs. During these protests, some 400,000 workers struck in Chicago on 1 May 1886; 45,000 other workers had won the eight-hour day without striking.

Bettmann; Chicago Historical Society photos (inset)

**Anarchist labor leaders August Spies (top) and Albert Parsons were among four hanged on 11 November 1887 for the Haymarket "conspiracy."**

The first of May demonstrations were peaceful. But this was not due to any effort by the bourgeoisie in Chicago. More than 1,000 National Guard troops were on standby in their armories, which were fortresses built in most cities after the 1877 railway strike. The Chicago capitalists and their hirelings in the police were looking to nip the growing labor movement in the bud, including by going after its leaders. So a Chicago newspaper on May 1 declared: "There are two dangerous ruffians at large in this city; two sneaking cowards who are trying to create trouble. One of them is named Parsons. The other is named Spies.... Mark them for today.... Make an example of them if trouble does occur!"

Well, there wasn't any trouble on that day. And the strike continued for several days. On May 3, as part of the eight-hour struggle, 6,000 union lumber-shovers [lumber yard workers] held a mass rally. By chance, the rally was held near the McCormick Harvester Machine Company plant. There had been a strike against this company, whose owners were particularly anti-union, going on since February 1886, unrelated to the eight-hour day struggle. But by May, about half of the employees of the plant had joined in the eight-hour movement. So 500 McCormick strikers came out for the protest on May 3.

On that day, as August Spies, one of the leading German labor-anarchist radicals of Chicago, was speaking, some of the strikers and lumber-shovers protested as scabs were leaving the McCormick plant. Suddenly 200 cops swarmed down on the workers, killing one, critically injuring five or six more and wounding unknown numbers. Outraged by this attack, Spies helped organize a protest the next day at Haymarket Square against this police violence.

On the evening of May 4, this 3,000-strong protest was relatively subdued, and the fact that it started to rain at the end meant that most of the people had left. Snme of the most important labor leaders, particularly the anarchists such as Parsons and Spies, were on the speakers list. The mayor of Chicago observed most of the demo but left early because it was uneventful. Just as the demonstration was about to end, some 280 cops showed up and ordered the 200 remaining protesters to disperse. As the protesters hegan tn leave, a bomh exploded suddenly. Nobody knows who threw the bomb. The only thing that's certain is that it wasn't anybody who was later convicted of throwing the bomb. The bomb itself was not responsible for most of the deaths. The deaths of seven cops, as well as the killing and injuring of protesters, occurred mainly because the police pulled out their guns and started shooting in all directions.

The cops, and the Chicago bourgeoisie, were incensed by the growing radical labor movement, and they saw in the Haymarket police riot a chance to get Spies and Parsons. What followed was an almost archetypal display of how the capitalist state—armed bodies of men, including the police, the prisons and court system—has nothing to do with justice and everything to do with protecting the rule and profits of the capitalists through violent force. This was the first red scare in U.S. history. Lucy Parsons, who was the wife of Albert Parsons, described the atmosphere shortly alter the riot: "A reign of terror has been inaugurated which would put to shame the most zealous Russian blood-hound." The police, disregarding all laws, rounded up leftists, unionists, immigrants. And once they narrowed down who their "suspects" were going to be, the court system then proceeded to legally lynch the anarchists and workers' leaders.

The trial was one of the most blatant examples that there is no justice in the capitalist courts. The judge, Joseph Gary, turned the trial into an inquisition, with the Haymarket defendants tried for something they had no part in. They were supposedly co-conspirators with somebody—unnamed and unidentified—who threw the bomb. To assure a conviction, the jurors were not chosen at random but were preselected to make sure there were no workers and that all were sufficiently reactionary. When some of the prospective jurors said that they were too biased against the defendants, Gary argued to seat them nonetheless.

On 11 November 1887, Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel and Adolph Fischer were hanged by the state of Illinois. Louis Lingg died in mysterious circumstances in his cell the day before his planned execution. Michael Schwab and Samuel Fielden had their death sentences commuted to life in prison. Oscar Neebe was sentenced to 15 years' hard labor. As James P. Cannon, who went on to become one of the founders of the American Communist Party and then the American Trotskyist movement, put it in a 1927 article titled "The Red Month of November": "They were the pioneers of the eight-hour day movement, and their crime was so heinous in the eyes of the master class that nothing but their blood would satisfy the vampires whose profits and power they menaced." May Day honors these proletarian heroes.

In 1893, Illinois governor John Altgeld released the remaining anarchists who were still in jail. So obvious was the anti-working-class hias of the court that Altgeld in his pardon noted what he called Gary's "malicious ferocity." But that is really the way that bourgeois democracy works: the state acts as the brutal enforcer of bourgeois rule, but it gets dressed up to make it prettier. One of the reasons May Day is not celebrated in the U.S. is that the bourgeoisie has a long memory and remembers what it really means. When I gave this forum in Chicago, the comrades pointed out that the police department's training facility used to have a statue honoring the cops in the Haymarket riot, in

the courtyard. Anybody who wanted to be a Chicago policeman saw that statue every day.

### Class Struggle and Black Oppression in the U.S.

The key to why this riot and this day became so important lies in the context of the class struggle in the U.S. during the period of the 1880s, a period referred to today as the "Great Upheaval." Unfortunately many people, including many radicals, don't know very much about this period, even though to a large degree it laid the basis for the labor struggles of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the 1910s and the CIO in the 1930s.

As with many things in American history, a good place to start is the Civil War, which lasted from 1861 to 1865. The Civil War was a bourgeois revolution, one of the most progressive wars in modern history. The war freed black people from slavery and paved the way for the full development of capitalism in the United States. During the period of Reconstruction after the Civil War, the Federal government extended the rights of citizenship to black people through the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. It used the power of the Army to protect former slaves and establish the Freedmen's Bureau. And it even mooted land reform. But the bourgeoisie did not complete the task of ending black oppression.

By this time, the American capitalist system was well on its way to becoming imperialist, something that would blossom fully over the next decades. Especially after the Paris Commune of March-May 1871, which was the first time the working class took power, continuing the social revolution that black liberation would have entailed was far from the minds of most capitalists in the U.S., even among "progressives" in the Republican Party. With the Compromise of 1877, the capitalist class betrayed the freedmen and removed the last Federal troops from the South, slamming the door shut on the hopes of black freedom.

The Civil War also inaugurated a fierce class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the industrializing North and West. Karl Marx has a famous quote in the first volume of *Capital*:

> "In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. But out of the death of slavery a new life at once arose. The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight hours' agitation, that ran with the seven-leagued boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California."

One of the main results of the failure of Reconstruction is that the labor movement and the fight for black freedom remained separate. To be sure, there were some links. Ira Steward, the founder of the eight-hour movement in the 1860s, is rumored to have fought with John Brown in Kansas, and abolitionist and Republican leader Wendell Phillips advocated the eight-hour day after the Civil War.

Another exception is Albert Parsons himself. Parsons grew up in the South and as a youth fought in the Confederate Army. During Reconstruction, he sympathized with the Radical Republicans and believed that the former slaves had rights. He married Lucy Parsons, who was of mixed-race background. Because of their support to Reconstruction and the fact that they were in a mixed marriage, they were essentially driven out of the South. They moved to Chicago, throwing themselves into the radical labor movement. As Parsons put it in his autobiography, which he wrote from his prison cell: "I have made some enemies. My enemies in the southern states consisted of those who oppressed the black slave. My enemies in the north are among those who would perpetuate the slavery of the wage workers" ("Autobiography of Albert R. Parsons," reprinted in *The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs* [1969]).

But while the shadow of the Civil War hung over the 1880s, it was a failing that the importance of the continued fight for black liberation remained alien to most of the labor movement. It was only after the October Revolution of 1917 that the importance of fighting for black liberation was driven home among left-wing workers in the United States, at the insistence of the Communist International under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The race-color caste oppression of black people at the bottom of American society is integral to the capitalist system itself. A key part of our understanding of black oppression is that it will take a third revolution—a workers revolution to smash capitalism—to achieve black liberation. And thus our slogans: Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution!

### The Early Labor Movement

It was no exaggeration when Marx said that the labor movement began in earnest after the Civil War. William Sylvis, an iron-molder, made the first attempt at a national trade-union federation in 1866, the National Labor Union. At the time of his premature death in 1869, Sylvis was in correspondence with the First International, of which Marx was a principal leader. The eight-hour day movement was the first real cause of the American labor movement. And in fact, the first May Day was not in 1886 but in 1867, when workers in Chicago demonstrated in support of a state law guaranteeing an eight-hour day. Like most such reforms, the bourgeoisie found a way around these laws.

Compared to Europe, the condition of the U.S. working class was contradictory. On the one hand, class relations between workers and capitalists were more brutal. In 1886, Karl Marx's daughter Eleanor and her husband, Edward Aveling, toured the United States. In their book, *The Working-Class Movement in America*, they wrote: "The first general impression left on the mind is, that in this country of extremes, those of poverty and wealth, of exploitation in its active and passive form, are more marked than in Europe.... There are in America far more trenchant distinctions between the capitalist and labouring class than in the older lands."

Leslie's Illustrated Weekly

**Knights of Labor leader Terence Powderly (center) being introduced by Frank Farrell, black delegate at union's tenth annual convention in Richmond, Virginia, 1886.**

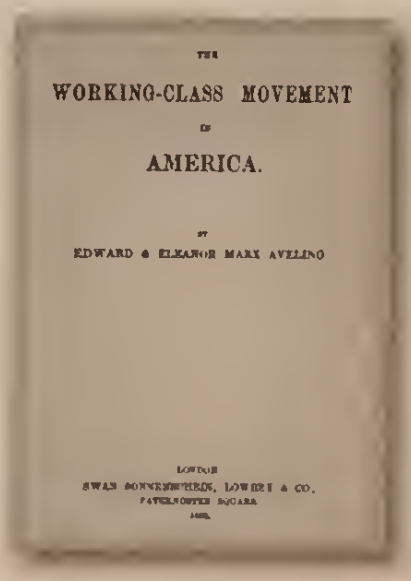
On the other hand, many workers did not see being proletarian as a permanent condition. Friedrich Engels called America "the ideal of all bourgeois: a country rich, vast, expanding, with purely bourgeois institutions unleavened by feudal remnants or monarchical traditions, and without a permanent and hereditary proletariat. Here everyone could become, if not a capitalist, at all events an independent man, producing or trading, with his own means, for his own account. And because there were not, *as yet*, classes with opposing interests, our—and your—bourgeois thought that America stood *above* class antagonisms and struggles" ("Engels to Florence Kelley-Wischnewetzky," 3 June 1886).

Since the age of President Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, most white male workers could vote, and they did so, supporting the Democratic Party. Workers could learn a trade and, after an apprenticeship, could become master workmen or small businessmen. Many could move to the countryside and make a

*continued on page 6*

Culver

**State militia fires on strikers in Baltimore during Great Rail Strike of 1877. Book by Eleanor Marx and her husband Edward Aveling described brutal class divide in U.S.**




# CAPITALIST PROFIT MEANS WORKERS' LIVES

*The following are the comments, edited for publication, of a Spartacist League speaker during the discussion period of the May 7 NYC forum.*

Jacob mentioned the Triangle Shirtwaist fire of March 25, 1911. This industrial murder of 146 New York City garment workers, mostly young immigrant women, galvanized the labor movement in the city. The doors of the Triangle Shirtwaist sweatshop were locked by the owners, imprisoning garment workers in the factory as the fire raged. This is not uncommon. We had an article on Bangladeshi women garment workers in *Workers Vanguard* No. 974 [18 February] which lays this out, with scores of fires in factories where the doors were locked, constituting mass murder by factory owners. Those who died in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire were either consumed in the flames or leapt nine or ten stories to their death on the pavement below.

What we saw this year with the Triangle Shirtwaist centennial was that the Democratic Party used the occasion of this tragedy caused by capitalism to seek to present themselves as the friends of labor. This comes off the Republicans and Democrats taking a sledgehammer to the unions, making working people pay with their jobs, homes and meager social benefits to bail out the capitalist parasites whose financial swindles kicked off the worst economic crisis since the 1930s Great Depression.

The centennial event was held outside the factory where the fire occurred, and a team of comrades sold *Workers Vanguard* to a crowd of about 2,000 workers. We sold our papers easily on the front-page article on the anti-union onslaught in Wisconsin and the article on the Bangladeshi women garment workers. Various leading lights of the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy spoke from the platform. While the Republicans revel in taking out the knife to slaughter the unions, the Democrats hand the knife to the union bureaucrats to slash the wages and benefits of their members in the name of "preserving collective bargaining." The labor bureaucrats are so beholden to the capitalist order that even the notion that there is a working class in this country is deep-sixed, reflected in the constant refrain about the "middle class" and not the working class.

Bettmann

**Victims of 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire in New York City.**

Speakers included Obama's Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, who speechified about the importance of unions and then went on to evoke the 29 coal miners who died in West Virginia and the eleven oil workers who were killed in the Deepwater Horizon explosion. She intoned that the "Department of Labor is back in the enforcement business." Certainly they are—enforcement of the Obama administration's union-busting "sacrifice" to bail out Wall Street. There was a Laborers union bureaucrat who translated for a Latino laborer, who powerfully described working with no medical benefits, with doors padlocked and no bathrooms. Meanwhile, a worker whose hand was mangled was fired. What is desperately needed is a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions and the forging of a revolutionary workers party that will lead the working class in the overthrow of the American capitalist order, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a class and the establishment of a planned socialist economy.

# May Day...

*(continued from page 5)*

good living as small farmers. Until the 1920s, more Americans lived in the countryside than in urban areas. This is almost exactly the opposite of most every other capitalist country, where peasants move to the city to escape the problems of the countryside.

Now as Marxists, we define one's class based on one's relationship to the means of production. Under capitalism, the bourgeoisie owns the means of production. The proletariat, or the working class, are those who are forced to sell their ability to work to the capitalists. Workers are exploited by the capitalists, who appropriate the products of their labor but pay only a fraction of their value back in wages. But class consciousness also has a different dimension: not just what one's position is at any given time, but how one sees one's position in the future. As Engels put it in "The Labor Movement in America" (26 January 1887):

> "In February 1886, American public opinion was almost unanimous on this one point: that there was no working class, in the European sense of the word, in America; that consequently no class struggle between workmen and capitalists, such as tore European society to pieces, was possible in the American Republic; and that, therefore, Socialism was a thing of foreign importation which could never take root on American soil."

The Haymarket events really punctured the myth of there being no classes or class struggle in the United States.

The last quarter of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century were marked by massive class battles in man railway strike in 1894; the Coeur d'Alene (Idaho) miners strikes in the 1890s; the so-called "Uprising of the 20,000" among women textile workers in New York in 1909-10 that gave rise to International Women's Day. There were the 1912 Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike; the Paterson, New Jersey, silk strike of 1913; the Ludlow Massacre of 1914 in Colorado; the Phelps Dodge strike in Bisbee, Arizona, in 1917; the 1919 steel strike.

Indiana State University

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**Eugene V. Debs was leader of railway union during 1894 Pullman strike. Right: Army was sent to smash strike.**

But despite this massive class struggle, the proletariat in this country has always been among the most politically backward. If nothing else, this should prove the truth of Lenin's assertion that economic struggle does not in and of itself lead to socialist consciousness, which needs to be brought to the working class from without. This requires the intervention of a revolutionary party into class and social struggles.

WV Graphic; Illustration: E. Schaumann

**Founding of International Working Men's Association (First International) in London, 1864. Superimposed is detail from Friedrich Engels' membership card.**

an almost endless class *war*. And I'm not using the term "war" lightly. Hundreds of strikers were killed and thousands imprisoned. In the 1880s, there were some 30,000 Pinkerton strikebreakers; the U.S. Army had less than 27,000 soldiers, and of course the soldiers could be used to break strikes as well. There was the first general strike in the United States, in St. Louis, as part of the national railway strike of 1877. There was the Haymarket police riot in 1886; the Homestead strike against Carnegie Steel in 1892; the Pull-

A defining feature of the U.S. historically is the lack of a mass social-democratic party or any other workers party that recognizes the division of society between workers and capitalists and the struggle between these two classes, if even in a crude way. Now I just want to make clear that our goal is *not* the creation of a social-democratic party. Following Lenin, we call such parties, like the British Labour Party, bourgeois workers parties, because while their base is in the working class, their leaderships and programs are dedicated to maintaining capitalism. What we stand for is the forging of a *revolutionary* workers party that fights for all the oppressed. In countries with social-democratic parties, this means splitting the base from the top. In the U.S., this means fighting to break the working class from the capitalist Democratic Party.

Bourgeois historians and political scientists have made a cottage industry of explaining why there is no labor party in the United States. Now, there are lots of reasons. One is the historic ethnic divisions among workers. Another is the importance of farmers in American society and the sense of upward mobility, real or illusory. For much of the 1880s and 1890s, it was not the working-class movement but the petty-bourgeois Populist movement that was seen as the vanguard of fighting against the excesses of capitalist industrialization. As the name implies, however, Populists saw the world divided not into classes but into the producers, or so-called "little people," on one side and the parasitical financiers, bankers and speculators on the other. Instead of socialism, populists advocated a whole array of schemes, some of them supportable and some of them rather bizarre—everything from nationalizing the railroads to a tax on land and printing "cheap money" based on silver instead of gold.

The fundamental reason why the American working class does not have even a rudimentary labor party is, as I mentioned before, the role that black oppression plays in maintaining capitalism. As we write in the Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.:

> "The central enduring feature of American capitalism, shaping and perpetuating this backward consciousness, is the structural oppression of the black population as a race-color caste at the bottom of society. Black oppression with its profound and pervasive ideological effects is fundamental to the American capitalist order. Obscuring the class divide, racism and white supremacy have served to bind white workers to their capitalist masters based on the illusion of a commonality of interest based on skin color."

## The Knights of Labor

I want to get back to the labor movement in the 1870s, a period of tremendous economic hardship. Until the 1930s, this period was called the Great Depression; today it's generally known as the Long Depression because it lasted throughout most of the 1870s. The bourgeoisie used the state and armed thugs to wage war against the working class. Trade unions generally stagnated and became very weak, with one exception. In 1869, tailors in Philadelphia, under the leadership of Uriah Stephens, began to organize a group that became known as the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor, the first national labor organization.

Who and what were the Knights of Labor? They're very hard to understand today. They changed over time and were, in practice, very decentralized, with different regions having different politics and different attitudes on various questions. As their name implies, the Knights at first were heavily influenced by Masonic traditions. They were originally a secret organization. You couldn't even tell somebody the name of the group before they joined. They had all kinds of rituals and handshakes and stuff like that.

In terms of their politics, on the one hand they were based on a pre-industrial republicanism and reflected populism. Their original declaration of principles stated: "We mean no conflict with legitimate enterprise, no antagonism to necessary capital." But on the other hand, Stephens had also called for "the complete emancipation of the wealth producers from the thraldom and loss of wage slavery." Their watchword was solidarity, and their motto was: "An injury to one is the concern of all." In their book, the Avelings described the Knights as "the first spontaneous expression by the American working people of their consciousness of themselves as a class."

The Knights are sometimes described as an industrial union. That's not exactly true. They had locals of skilled trades and also had what were called "mixed" locals, which contained unskilled workers. As opposed to the skilled craft unionists of the time, they believed in class solidarity and also understood that industrialization created a mass of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in need of organization. Two of the earliest industrial unions originated from the Knights of Labor: the brewery workers union and the United Mine Workers. The brewery workers were devastated by Prohibition, but the United Mine Workers went on to be key in the founding of the CIO industrial unions in the 1930s.

The Knights leadership under Terence V. Powderly, who succeeded Stephens in the 1880s, was opposed to strikes. But, as is often the case, the rank and file often felt differently. And in this period workers were eager to organize. As the country climbed out of the depression in the early 1880s, the percentage of nonagricultural workers in unions jumped from 2 percent to 12 percent in about five years. In 1885, railroad workers organized in the Knights faced down robber baron Jay Gould—one of the strongest, most powerful capitalists of the period—forcing him to accede to some of their demands and to agree to negotiate with the union. This was seen as a major defeat for Gould and caused the prestige of the Knights to soar, along with their membership.

The Knights went from less than 10,000 members in 1878 to as many as 700,000 in 1886. In February of that year alone, the Knights organized 515 local assemblies. They had become truly a national union. They put out propaganda in various languages to attract immigrant workers, although it's worth noting that, like most unions, they excluded Chinese workers. They organized women workers. They also organized locals in England, Belgium, Ireland and Australia and New Zealand. And at times the Knights broke through the color bar. In November 1887, they organized a three-week strike of some 10,000 overwhelmingly black sugar plan-

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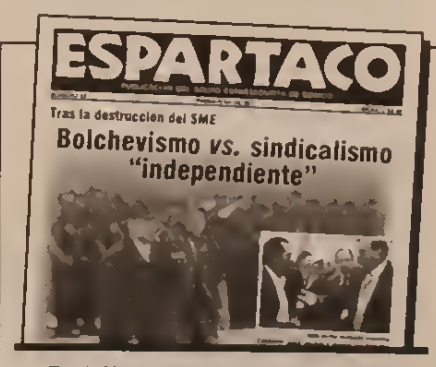


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tation workers in Louisiana. The strike was broken by racist vigilantes who mowed down, by one estimate, as many as 300 black workers.

By the time of Haymarket in 1886, the Knights were the largest union in the country. But they were not the only national union. In 1881, the much smaller Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions was founded, and this would eventually become the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Its key leaders were Samuel Gompers and Adolph Strasser, both from the Cigar Makers union, and P. J. McGuire, the founder of the Carpenters union. In the 1880s, the Cigar Makers split from the Knights in a very sordid way, involving pretty much all the elements you would expect from Gompers, including jurisdictional disputes, scabbing on other unions and anti-socialism.

Gompers, Strasser and McGuire are often described as having cut their teeth as Marxists. And it's true that they—like many successful trade-union bureaucrats since—had some kind of a leftist background. But it was not Marxism but social-democratic reformism, which they adapted to American conditions. Like the revisionists in the German Social Democracy, the AFL's early leaders accepted capitalism. Here is Strasser in 1883: "We have no ultimate ends.... We are fighting only for immediate objects—objects that can be realized in a few years."

Unlike the inclusive Knights of Labor, the AFL leadership focused on skilled craft workers. It became increasingly anti-black, anti-Chinese and all-around piggish. Gompers emphasized what he called "pure and simple" trade unionism.

Library of Congress

**1913 May Day parade in New York City's Union Square, with signs in Yiddish, Italian and English.**

He was vehement in his opposition to creating a working-class political party. The heritage of Gompers and the AFL accounts for much of the weakness of the American labor movement today, led by its pro-capitalist bureaucracy. The fruits of its class collaboration can be seen in the fact that today unionization rates have fallen to the point that they are about the same as they were in the mid 1880s.

## Working-Class Politics in the 1880s

I had mentioned that there was no socialist party in the United States. Now in point of fact this isn't strictly speaking true. Although much weaker than in Europe, in the U.S. at this time there was a tradition of socialism, broadly defined. By the 1880s and 1890s, there were two main trends within the American socialist movement. The first was social-democratic, the second anarchist. And I just want to make a point that it is not always easy to separate these two trends when looking at the period. Both contained working-class militants who saw their fight as putting the proletariat in power. It really wasn't until the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 that there was a clear differentiation between revolutionary and reformist in the socialist movement.

The first socialist organization in the U.S. was the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), which was founded in Newark, New Jersey, in 1877. A lot of people know about the SLP because in the 1890s it would be led by Daniel De Leon. Before this, the SLP largely consisted of German-speaking immigrants, who often had a higher theoretical level than American workers but remained aloof from American reality, including the centrality of black oppression in maintaining capitalism.

In the 1880s, many socialists split from the rather legalistic SLP in the direction of anarchism, with many joining the International Working People's Association (IWPA). By 1885, this group had some 7,000 members, compared to 4,000 members in the SLP. Until about the time of World War I, the American bourgeoisie saw anarchism as a more dangerous threat than the legalistic social democrats and reserved the harshest repression for anarchists.

What was called "anarchism" really comprised two very different trends. The first was led by a German immigrant, Johann Most. Although he had been a Social Democratic delegate to the German Reichstag [parliament], Most became a leading proponent of what was known as revolutionary terrorism, particularly involving dynamite. He wrote a whole book on dynamite. In 1879, when Most was in exile in London before he finally moved to America, Marx wrote to Friedrich Sorge in Hoboken that "Our complaint against Most is not that his *Freiheit* is *too revolutionary*; our complaint is that it has *no revolutionary content*, but merely indulges in *revolutionary jargon*." That kind of described what Most was about, very vehement phraseology without really a lot behind it.

There was another trend within the anarchist movement, the so-called "Chicago Idea" centered around Chicago anarchists Parsons and Spies. Both had been active in the SLP, including running for office, and also in the Knights of Labor, but had gravitated toward anarchism. Their anarchism was very similar to what would later be known as syndicalism: the idea that revolutionary unions were the basis of getting rid of capitalism and building socialism. There were some five to six thousand members of the IWPA in Chicago alone. The IWPA had five papers, including a biweekly English paper, which Parsons edited, a daily German paper edited by Spies and a daily Bohemian (Czech) paper. The Parsons wing of the anarchist movement, with its emphasis on militant unionism, is a thread that runs through the Industrial Workers of the World, which formed later on. Some of the best IWW elements, such as Cannon, found their way to revolutionary Marxism after the Bolshevik Revolution.

## The Eight-Hour Day Movement in the 1880s

After Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling visited the U.S. in 1886, they described how many workers they met toiled 55, 60 or even 80 hours over a six-day workweek. Some industries were worse than others. Bakers were probably the worst of all—anybody who has read Marx's *Capital* probably remembers the description of bakers. Transportation workers were also forced to work long hours.

As an aside, although the 40-hour week is supposedly enshrined today in labor law, it's still out of reach for a lot of workers. Many are still cheated out of pay, or even if they are paid, they are made to work mandatory overtime. Even if it's not mandatory, many are compelled to work overtime, or to take another job, just to survive. While I was working on this forum, two things happened that drew my attention to the importance of the eight-hour day. The first were those two long-distance bus accidents in New York and New Jersey that highlighted the fact that for many workers, workdays of 12 or more hours are still common. And then within the last several weeks was the rash of air traffic controllers falling asleep. Now that's really scary, but it's also a predictable result of the busting of the PATCO union in the early 1980s, which resulted in horrid working conditions.

Basing ourselves on the Transitional Program, which was written by Trotsky for the founding of the Fourth International in 1938, we call for "30 for 40"—30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay. This links the fight for humane work to the struggle for jobs for all. I am sure that to many Americans, this sounds completely unreal. But it was the same for the 40-hour week in the 1880s. The capitalist class and its press argued that death by overwork was an inalienable right, and if a man wanted to work—or a woman or a child—for that long, it was nobody else's business. The more honest argued that it would hurt the capitalists' profits to limit the workday.

In 1884, the forerunner of the AFL declared that "eight hours shall constitute a legal day's work from and after May 1, 1886." Gompers' name is often associated with this motion, but I want to make two points. The first is that the craft-union federation was much smaller than the Knights of Labor and had less to lose. The Knights were officially opposed to the call to strike for the eight-hour day. Terence Powderly refused to participate in the 1 May 1886 strike. Some anarchists also originally opposed the eight-hour day slogan, arguing that it didn't matter how many hours you worked because you were still working for the capitalists. But in Chicago, it was the anarchists, particularly Spies and Parsons, both members of the Knights, who made this struggle come to life. The May Day strike was largely coordinated by the Central Labor Union, led by Parsons and Spies.

The Haymarket riot and the subsequent witchhunt created a massive anti-radical scare that set back the labor movement quite a bit. Anarchist newspapers were shut down, and the anarchist movement never really achieved the same success that it had before. The Knights of Labor, even though they were not involved as an organization in the eight-hour day struggle, were basically swept away by this reaction. The main beneficiaries within the labor movement of the destruction of the anarchists and of the overall reactionary atmosphere were Gompers and the AFL, with their narrow focus on skilled workers.

## May Day: International Workers Holiday

In the years following the Haymarket affair, the tradition of May Day was kept alive in the U.S. largely by socialists and anarchists. By the late 1890s, the AFL bureaucracy under Gompers had abandoned any celebration of May Day, with its hint of radicalism. Instead, they began to push Labor Day in September. Labor Day represents almost the exact opposite of May Day. Where May Day is a day of international proletarian struggle, Labor Day was instituted to celebrate the *American* worker's contribution to American politics. For Gompers, this meant skilled, English-speaking men, dressed up in the finest clothes, coming out to show their respectability.

However, May Day and the struggle for an eight-hour day soon became a focal point of class struggle throughout the world. In 1889, an American delegate to the Paris Congress of the Second (Socialist) International called to make May Day a day of international labor struggle. Why did workers in Europe and across the world heed this call? One reason is that workers in the U.S. came from all parts of the world, so their struggles were closely followed elsewhere. Another big reason is

*continued on page 8*

Robert Sennecke

Bettmann

**Left: Revolutionary socialist Karl Liebknecht speaking in Berlin, 1918. Right: Soldiers killed in World War I, when millions of working-class men were slaughtered.**

Reuters

**Labor chief Richard Trumka introduces Barack Obama, CEO of American capitalism, at August 2010 meeting of AFL-CIO Executive Council in Washington, D.C.**

# May Day...

*(continued from page 7)*

that the U.S. in the 1880s was an up and coming imperialist power, and workers' struggle here resonated loudly elsewhere. As did the point that in the U.S., with its claims of democracy and social mobility, bourgeois rule depends on naked violence against the working class.

This is clear if you read what some European Marxists wrote at the time. The founder of Russian Marxism, Georgi Plekhanov, wrote in an 1890 article about May Day:

> "The practical Yankees have forgotten all shame and every tradition of political freedom since they noticed the bugbear of communism. The judicial murder of the anarchists in Chicago showed that in the struggle for existence all means are as suitable for the American bourgeoisie as for the European. 'The specter' of communism has become a universal guest; the workers' question a universal question in the full sense of the word."

Or as the German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht put it in his famous book, *Militarism and Anti-Militarism* (1907), "The gruesome judicial sequel of 4th May, 1886, which proved in a striking way what American democratic class justice is capable of is universally known."

Within a decade of the Haymarket affair, workers across the world were celebrating May Day as a day to fight for their class interests. The first congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1898 explicitly included organizing May Day demonstrations as a task of its Central Committee. Back in the U.S., by the early 20th century the Socialist Party was holding massive rallies, including here in New York where it was common for some 30,000 to 50,000 workers to march under the party's banners. One hundred years ago, May Day commemorated the 146 mainly female Jewish and Italian garment workers who died in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire.

In a 1924 speech, Trotsky noted that "the eight-hour working day...the international solidarity of workers and the struggle against militarism are the three fundamental May Day slogans." May Day developed at the same time as the rise of imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, marked by the dominance of finance capital and the struggle of the richest capitalist powers to divide the world among themselves. May Day became a day for the working class to show solidarity with its class brothers and sisters in other countries and to oppose the inevitable wars that imperialism has on offer.

In 1898, the New York City police chief banned the SLP from celebrating May Day. This was the year of the Spanish-American War, the bloody debut of U.S. imperialism. According to the *New York Times* of that day, the chief "had heard that inflammatory speeches would be made denouncing the course of the United States with Spain" and demanded the right to read the rally's resolutions before the march. When the SLP refused, he revoked their permit to march.

As imperialism developed and moved toward the carnage of the First World War, when workers from different countries would be forced to kill their class brothers from other countries, May Day became even more a symbol of proletarian internationalism. In 1913, on the eve of the war, Rosa Luxemburg wrote in "The Idea of May Day on the March": "And the more the idea of May Day, the idea of resolute mass actions as a manifestation of international unity, and as a means of struggle for peace and for socialism, takes root in the strongest troops of the International, the German working class, the greater is our guarantee that out of the world war which, sooner or later, is unavoidable, will come forth a definite and victorious struggle between the world of labor and that of capital."

But far from fighting against the war, most of the leadership of the Second International betrayed the working class, showing their social chauvinism by supporting their "own" bourgeoisies against the workers of other lands. But there were socialist militants who fought against this betrayal. In 1916, Karl Liebknecht was arrested in Germany for his proletarian internationalism, which he expressed in a speech on May Day, when he declared:

> "Forward, let us fight the government; let us fight these mortal enemies of all freedom.... Workers, comrades, and you, women of the people, let not this festival of May, the second during the war, pass without protest against the Imperialist Slaughter. On the first of May let millions of voices cry, 'Down with the shameful crime of the extermination of peoples! Down with those responsible for the War!'"

Here in New York City in 1917, when the left wing of the Socialist movement was swelling with workers and immigrants, 125,000 people marched on May Day.

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**Left: Russian factory workers at Petrograd May Day demonstration in 1917 carried Bolshevik slogans such as "Long Live Socialism" and "Long Live the Third International!" Right: Madrid May Day demonstration in 1919 hails Soviet workers state.**

## The Bolsheviks and May Day

Amid the wreckage of the imperialist war, the working class in Russia, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, seized power from the capitalists in the October Revolution of 1917. The Revolution stood as the living embodiment of the ideals of May Day, and it is the Bolsheviks who made May Day synonymous with Communism internationally. In April 1918—some six months after the Revolution—Lenin signed a decree to "mark the great revolution that has transformed Russia," declaring that tsarist monuments should be replaced with tributes to the working class and that by May Day, "some of the more monstrous statues will have already been removed and the first models of new monuments set out for the masses to see." These would display "the ideas and mood of revolutionary working Russia." By the first May Day after a victorious revolution in this country, the working class should have torn down the monuments to the leaders of the Confederate slavocracy and to the imperialist war criminals who came after them.

In his 1924 speech, Trotsky stated: "We represent not merely the irreconcilable opponents and enemies of today's Second International but we also represent its direct heirs: everything that was liberating, progressive and forward looking in it we have taken over, including the May Day holiday. For us this is a great festival of liberation at the same time as German social-democracy suppresses it by force. And the same thing with the eight-hour working day and with all the rest of the May Day slogans."

At that time, a conservative bureaucratic caste led by Stalin had arisen and begun to consolidate control over the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International. This was to take on a programmatic expression in late 1924, as the Stalinist bureaucracy propounded the anti-Marxist dogma of "building socialism in one country." May Day would become a tribune to push not revolutionary internationalism but the narrow interests of the bureaucratic regime that sat atop the workers state. Through its futile pursuit of accommodation with imperialism and its opposition to international revolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy undermined the gains of the revolution and ultimately opened the door to capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92.

In most of the world, May Day is still celebrated by millions of workers. However, what dominates these protests is not the Bolshevik program of revolutionary proletarian internationalism but the illusions and reformist program pushed by the trade-union bureaucrats, the social democrats and what remains of the Stalinists. But as highlighted by the imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, by the onslaught against unions, black people and immigrants, the revolutionary lessons of May Day are crucially relevant today, as are the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. There is a need for hard class struggle to fight for immigrant rights, to organize the unorganized, to establish working-class independence from the bourgeois parties, to oppose imperialism—struggles that must be linked to the fight for socialist revolution. These tasks demand building a revolutionary workers party, the task that the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, sets for itself.■

Y. Shteinberg

**Delegates at March 1919 founding Congress of Communist International in Moscow.**


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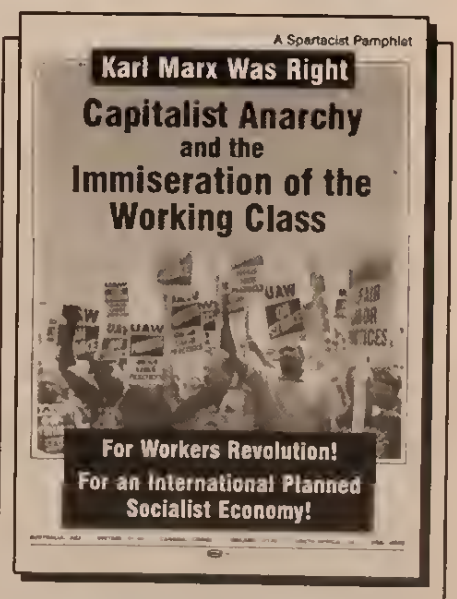


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# Labor: Organize Wal-Mart!

## NYC

Anti-union colossus Wal-Mart wants to boldly go where it has never gone before: New York City. In response, a coalition led by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and including small business owners, bourgeois politicians, community groups and churches is beseeching the Democrat-led City Council to stop the "invasion" with zoning law changes and other legal obstacles. The interests of the working class and poor are not served by agitating over which capitalist retail chain distributes wares in what market. Instead, labor needs to seize the opportunity of the corporate behemoth's arrival in one of the most heavily unionized cities in the U.S. and finally begin an aggressive campaign to *organize Wal-Mart!*

Everyone has heard horror stories about this giant retailer, which, originating in Arkansas, brought the racist, anti-union "open shop" of the Southern bourgeoisie with it as it moved into the rest of the country and a large chunk of the world. (It is currently making a bid to buy South African retailer Massmart.) Off-the-clock overtime, employees locked in overnight, violation of child labor laws, flagrant discrimination against women, racist hiring practices—the list of Wal-Mart crimes grows by the day.

These iniquities, however, do not particularly distinguish Wal-Mart from Home Depot, Target, the German grocer Aldi or, for that matter, small independent grocers. Whatever the difference in scale, each is a capitalist enterprise whose profit is based on the exploitation of labor. Squeezing workers dry is what they do.

The average wage for a full-time Wal-Mart worker in the U.S. in 2008 was $10.86 per hour. Many of the workers who might be able to afford the company's lousy health plan leave Wal-Mart, which is notorious for its high turnover rate, before they are eligible for the program. Wal-Mart's poverty-level wages have the effect of driving down wages and working conditions for *all* workers.

Wal-Mart, the largest company in the world, is angling for a space in the Gateway II shopping center in Brooklyn's East New York ghetto as its entry point into the New York market. Following a well-tested playbook, the company is counting on being positively received by residents, whose access to a variety of goods and lower prices—much less a decent supermarket—is very limited.

Al Jones

**February 3: Union contingents and small business owners protest outside City Hall against proposed opening of Wal-Mart in East New York. Labor tops reject hard struggle needed to organize the anti-union behemoth.**

Unemployment is 13.9 percent in East New York, almost 5 percent higher than the city average, and Wal-Mart is promising jobs to area residents. At the same time, it is appealing to the beleaguered NYC construction trade unions by pledging to build its stores with union labor—before slamming the door on unions once they open.

In the few instances in which local workers have succeeded in organizing a Wal-Mart department or an entire store, the company has picked up its marbles and gone elsewhere. When meat cutters in the Supercenter in Jacksonville, Texas, won union representation, Wal-Mart disbanded its butcher shops nationwide and switched to pre-packaged meats. When workers at the store in Jonquière, Quebec, voted to join the UFCW, the first such success in North America, Wal-Mart closed the store.

In China, a deformed workers state, workers at all Wal-Mart stores are organized by the Stalinist bureaucracy's trade-union federation. This is doubly ironic. The pro-capitalist labor tops at unions like the UFCW and its Retail, Wholesale and Department store affiliate, who are heading up the "Walmart Free NYC" coalition, have barely lifted a finger to organize the retailer in the U.S. But they sure do blow hard with anti-Communist China-bashing and "America first" protectionist poison (see "Labor: Organize Wal-Mart!" *WV* No. 851, 8 July 2005).

By focusing on blocking new Wal-Mart stores, in more than one city the labor bureaucracy has found itself opposed by sections of the black and minority population looking for cheaper commodities. But there is a way for the unions to fight for their own interests as well as those of the ghetto and barrio poor: undertaking a massive and combative union organizing drive. Unionizing Wal-Mart will require the kind of hard class struggle that built the country's CIO unions in the 1930s—mass pickets, occupations and strike action. This militant perspective is utterly counterposed to the "corporate" and "community" campaigns the current labor leadership favors.

What better place to kick off such a drive than New York City, historically a labor stronghold in a state with the highest union membership rate in the country at over 24 percent. Today NYC labor is under attack by a capitalist class that is chalking up one victory after another in its relentless drive to cripple the unions if not destroy them outright. Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council to which "Walmart Free NYC" appeals are busy bashing the teachers and other city workers. A bare-knuckles campaign to organize Wal-Mart combined with vigorous defense of the public employee and construction workers unions now under attack would go a long way to turn this around. Success in the UFCW's current drive to organize Target stores in the NYC area would be a good start.

Our goal is not just to see Wal-Mart unionized but to *expropriate* it, along with the productive property of the entire capitalist class, through workers revolution. The wealth and highly developed infrastructure of companies like Wal-Mart should be harnessed by a centrally planned economy under workers rule. To this end, there must be a struggle to break the multiracial working class from the capitalist Democratic Party and to build a workers party that fights for a workers government! ■

## Liu Xiaobo...

*(continued from page 3)*

for actions in Beijing, Shanghai and other Chinese cities. A headline in the *New York Times* (29 April) captured it: "Trying to Stir Up a Popular Protest in China, From a Bedroom in Manhattan." The "Jasmine revolution" turned out to be a bust. Only a handful heeded the call, including the U.S. ambassador, who just "happened to be passing by" one of the announced locations at the time. The very places chosen for these "democracy" protests spoke to their upper-class character: Starbucks, McDonald's and Wangfujing, a fancy shopping district in Beijing patronized by foreign tourists and China's newly rich.

### Fake Trotskyists Push "Democratic" Counterrevolution

Someone might argue that would-be participants in the "Jasmine revolution" were cowed by effective police-state repression. However, this same period saw a three-day strike and angry protests in Shanghai by truckers, most of whom own their own rigs, directed at soaring prices for gasoline and also high government fees. There is no lack of seething discontent among large sections of the Chinese populace—workers in both state-owned and private enterprises, peasant leaseholders and also members of the urban petty bourgeoisie. The question is what political direction will opposition to the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy take. A decisive factor will be the character and aims of the leadership of such opposition.

When the political situation in China opens up, revolutionary Marxists will confront tendencies that advocate classless "democracy" while also claiming to stand for the interests of the working class and even for socialism. These will include groups that falsely claim the mantle of Trotskyism, such as *October Review*. This outfit is aligned internationally with the United Secretariat (USec), which has a long history of serving "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution by prostituting Trotsky's revolutionary opposition to Stalinism. During the last phase of the Cold War in the 1980s-early '90s, the USec, led by the late Ernest Mandel, supported every imperialist-backed, anti-Communist force in the Soviet sphere, from Solidarność in Poland to the "democrats" around Boris Yeltsin in Russia. The *October Review* crowd is, if anything, even more strident in expressing anti-Communist hostility toward China than were the Mandelites toward the Soviet Union. But this is simply a matter of degree.

Genuine Trotskyism means carrying forward the revolutionary proletarian-internationalist banner of the October Revolution of 1917. As we concluded our article on Charter 08:

> "A proletarian political revolution producing a China of worker and peasant councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world, dealing a deathblow to the bourgeoisie's 'death of communism' propaganda, lifting up the downtrodden masses of the former Soviet Union and East Europe and inspiring the workers in the imperialist heartlands. This, ultimately, is the only perspective that can defeat the siren call of 'democracy' pushed by imperialist-backed outfits as well as fake 'socialists' who are enemies of the gains of the Chinese Revolution." ■

## Refugees...

*(continued from page 12)*

brothers in East Europe and against the Chinese deformed workers state as well.

Rifondazione Comunista and the rest of Italy's reformist left have been shedding crocodile tears over the fate of immigrants and refugees under the Berlusconi government and denouncing racist atrocities against immigrants perpetrated by the Qaddafi regime in Libya. What Rifondazione & Co. would like to hide is that the 2010 agreements between Qaddafi and Berlusconi to work together against immigrants effectively constituted a sanction of a previous agreement signed in December 2007 by the government of Romano Prodi, in which Rifondazione's current Secretary was a minister. And slaughtering immigrants and refugees at sea is not the exclusive prerogative of right-wing governments. We do not forget the tragic sinking of the *Kater i Rades*, a boat loaded with Albanian refugees that was sunk in 1997 by the Italian military boat *Sibilla*, killing more than 100. This was when Italy was ruled by a popular-front government supported by Rifondazione.

The reformists also bear direct responsibility for the current imperialist massacre in Libya and for the mass murder of immigrants at sea, through their support to the UN/NATO attacks on Libya and/or their hailing of the Benghazi-based opposition that is acting as the imperialists' ground troops. Ahmed Jibril, a spokesman for the National Transitional Council in Benghazi, told the TV program "Porta a Porta" that they are "totally in favor of and encourage" the joint patrolling of Libyan borders with EU troops, railing that "illegal immigrants came to Libya and remained for months and years, spreading diseases and provoking clashes with Libyan citizens." Opposition forces have rounded up, tortured and killed people suspected of being Qaddafi supporters, especially black Africans alleged to be his mercenaries.

For the working class to take a stand in defense of Libya is particularly key in Italy, a country whose bourgeoisie has long sucked the blood of the Libyan people and is still among the main beneficiaries of their oppression. The only "human right" the imperialist masters truly recognize is their own "right" to exploit Libya's vast gas and oil reserves. Before the war, Italy got 25 percent of its oil imports and 13 percent of its gas from Libya, and Italy's biggest companies (headed by the Eni oil conglomerate) occupy leading positions there. This year marks a century of imperialist plunder of Libya by the Italian bourgeoisie, which occupied the country in 1911. After ousting the Ottoman army, Italian forces proceeded to wipe out any resistance. Using poison gas, concentration camps and mass murder, they killed more than 70,000 people and fully 80-90 percent of the livestock. Our defense of Libya against imperialism is in the best traditions of the Italian proletariat, which in 1911 rose in revolt in many towns against the bloody imperialist occupation.

To put an end to the imperialist system of war, neocolonial domination and racist oppression, the proletariat needs to smash the capitalist system and replace it with a collectivized, planned economy, on an international scale. Only through the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist ruling classes will the proletariat be able to rationally use and develop society's productive resources, on the basis of its own state power, for the benefit of all. This struggle requires, as its necessary instrument, the reforging of the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

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# Israel...

*(continued from page 1)*

Both Palestinian Arabs and Hebrew-speaking Israelis lay claim to a small portion of the Near East. Key to the creation of a nation of Hebrew-speaking people in Palestine was the rise of the Nazis in Germany, which caused massive waves of Jewish emigration both before the Holocaust and again after World War II. The Zionists had appealed directly to British imperialism, which controlled Palestine militarily, to sponsor a so-called "Jewish homeland." The British rulers, anti-Semitic to the core, agreed because they saw this as a way to further their divide-and-rule schemes in the Near East, at a time when the British Empire was in sharp decline. The European-derived Jewish settlers were supplemented by an influx of Oriental Jews fleeing Arab countries.

As we explained in "Birth of the Zionist State, Part Two: The 1948 War" (*WV* No. 45, 24 May 1974):

> "It was clear that the establishment of an independent nation-state, either by Palestinian Arabs or the Jews, would occur in Palestine only at the expense of the other nation. When national populations are geographically interpenetrated, as they were in Palestine, an independent nation-state can be created only by their forcible separation (forced population transfers, etc.). Thus the democratic right of self-determination becomes abstract, as it can be exercised only by the stronger national grouping driving out or destroying the weaker one.
>
> "In such cases the only possibility of a democratic solution lies in a social transformation."

So long as the national principle prevails, the oppression of the Palestinians by the massively armed Zionist state will only deepen. The only way to achieve an equitable solution to the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples is through the overthrow of capitalist rule in Israel and the surrounding Arab states, where millions of Palestinians languish. The national emancipation of the Palestinians—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—necessarily entails workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, where more than half the population is Palestinian, as well as the Syrian Ba'athist and Lebanese regimes.

The Arab working masses must be broken from Islamic fundamentalism and bourgeois nationalism, and the Israeli workers must be broken from the Zionist consciousness that politically binds them to their Israeli exploiters. We have no illusions that this is an easy task, but the alternative is the perpetuation and deepening of the misery of the Palestinians and continual threats of military conflict, with a nuclear-armed Israeli state prepared to obliterate its neighbors, whatever the consequences. Israel is a class-divided society, with high income disparities. Sephardic Jews, though overwhelmingly under the sway of right-wing and religious parties, suffer widespread discrimination and poverty.

AFP photos

**Above: Barack Obama meets with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and Palestinian Authority's Mahmoud Abbas (right) in New York, September 2009. Below: Palestinian police block protesters en route to Jewish settlements in Hebron, West Bank, on May 15.**

Revolutionary Marxists fight to forge workers parties throughout the region in political combat against all forms of nationalism and religious reaction. ***Down with the oil sheiks, emirs, kings, colonels and Zionist rulers—Workers to power! For a socialist federation of the Near East!***

## Bankrupt Arab Nationalism

The outlines of what Washington sees as a "solution" in Israel/Palestine were laid out in the 1993 Oslo "peace" accords between Israel's Labor Party government of Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Brokered by then-president Bill Clinton, the deal established the Palestinian Authority as the Zionists' police auxiliaries in the Occupied Territories, giving it some limited powers in the West Bank and Gaza. We noted at the time that the accord "does not offer even the most deformed expression of self-determination" ("Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto," *WV* No. 583, 10 September 1993).

The Oslo accords led directly to the doubling of the settler population in the Occupied Territories by the end of the decade. Most significantly, the Palestinians became even more marginalized from Israel's economy as the Israeli capitalists increasingly resorted to the use of migrant labor from Asia and elsewhere.

The political bankruptcy of the PLO and the increasingly desperate situation the Palestinians faced set the stage for the rise of reactionary Islamic groups like Hamas. In 2006, Hamas won a Palestinian parliamentary election and then seized power in Gaza in a military conflict with Palestinian Authority forces. Presented by some in the Western left as a paragon of resistance to Zionist rule, Hamas in fact was initially promoted by the Israeli rulers as a counterweight to secular Palestinian nationalists. Israel set up conservative "Village Leagues" in the Occupied Territories where the Islamic Association, a front group of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and predecessor of Hamas, gained prominence. The Zionist government also funded welfare programs to help the Islamists win a base among the poor. Israel broke relations with Hamas in the fall of 1989 after discovering that Hamas had killed two Israeli soldiers.

Recently the new Egyptian military regime brokered a "reconciliation" agreement in Cairo between Fatah, the dominant party in the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, and Hamas, the ruling party in Gaza. Twelve smaller organizations, ranging from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine on the left to the hardcore reactionaries of Islamic Jihad, also signed on. The agreement calls for holding new elections and forming a coalition government, allowing the Palestinian parties to present the UN in September with the basis for declaring in favor of the semblance of a Palestinian state. In fact, this is more in the nature of bargaining over the terms of oppression of the Palestinians, who would remain locked down in their desperate ghettos.

The unity agreement has been hailed in the U.S. by the Workers World Party as bolstering "the struggle for a free Palestine" and providing an "unmistakable sign of the importance of the Arab revolution that has swept the Middle East and North Africa" (*Workers World*, 9 May). The WWP's political cousins in the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) also hailed the Cairo agreement, posting it on its Web site and writing a May 12 article attributing the pact to the "Egyptian revolution" and "a Palestinian youth-led movement...inspired by the revolutionary uprisings" in North Africa.

The WWP/PSL's support to the unity pact is but the latest expression of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalism they have long promoted in the Arab countries and elsewhere in the Third World, by which they act as apologists for brutal capitalist regimes. The pro-Palestinian rhetoric of the capitalist rulers of the Arab states—which have long had their own *modus vivendi* with the Zionist rulers—is a cynical means to divert popular discontent at home into a show of opposition to Zionism. Thus, forces in Syria linked to strongman Bashar al-Assad bused "Nakba Day" protesters to the normally off-limits border of the Golan Heights, which Syria lost to Israel in 1967. This came as Assad's military and security forces have for weeks unsuccessfully sought to drown in blood the almost daily mass protests sweeping the country.

Contrary to the myth of Arab unity behind the Palestinian cause, the bourgeois Arab regimes have been ruthless enemies of Palestinian national emancipation. When Arab armies went to war with Israel in 1948, it was not to liberate the Palestinians but to seize territory allotted to the Palestinians under the partition plan. Between 1948 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Jordan and Egypt occupied the West Bank and Gaza respectively, brutally repressing the Pales-


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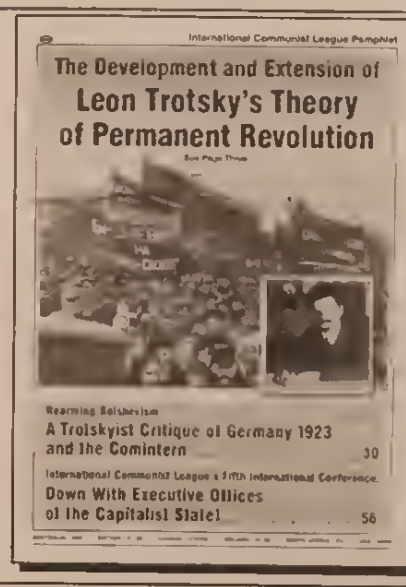


Reuters

**Squalid Khan Younis Palestinian refugee camp in Gaza Strip.**

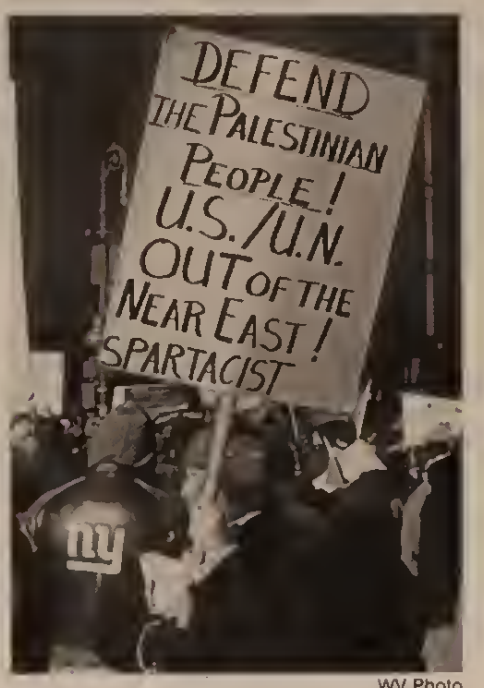
tinians, who remained politically dispossessed. In 1970, Jordanian King Hussein carried out the "Black September" massacre of some 10,000 Palestinians—with the acquiescence of Egyptian president and Arab nationalist idol Gamal Abdel Nasser. From the oil sheiks of the Gulf emirates to the bankers of Beirut and the bonapartists of Cairo and Damascus, the ruling classes of the Near East are subordinated to the imperialists, subject to the dictates of the world capitalist market and ultimately dependent on the U.S. and other capitalist powers for their own survival.

### For Proletarian Internationalism!

The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt during what has been dubbed the "Arab spring" have been dominated by class-collaborationist coalitions ranging from viciously anti-woman Islamic fundamentalists to bourgeois liberals and reformist leftists. In the name of "national unity," the proletariat, whose strike actions had contributed to the downfall of Tunisia's Ben Ali dictatorship and Egypt's Mubarak regime, has remained politically submerged as a class. In Libya, the "coalition" of Islamists, tribal leaders, CIA stooges and defectors from Qaddafi's regime appealed for imperialist military intervention and, aided by NATO bombs, has provided the ground troops.

In Egypt, the same military that had been the backbone of the Mubarak regime came forward openly as the governmental power, arresting and torturing hundreds of leftists, worker militants and others. The same military rulers who won plaudits for arranging the Palestinian "unity" agreement had earlier set their forces against Egyptians trying to march to the Gaza border on "Nakba Day" in solidarity with the Palestinian masses. Women and Coptic Christians are increasingly besieged by reactionary fundamentalists. This is the reality behind what the WWP, PSL and others call the "Egyptian Revolution."

Revolutionary Marxists fight for the proletariat to emerge as a contender for power in its own name, independent of all bourgeois political forces. A socialist revolution in Egypt, with its large, militant working class, could open a vista of national and social liberation for the oppressed Palestinian masses, and, extending a hand of working-class solidarity to the Hebrew-speaking proletariat of Israel, could help lay the basis for shattering the Zionist garrison state of Israel from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. Throughout the region, internationalist workers parties must be forged. By linking the struggle for socialist federations of the Near East and North Africa to the fight for proletarian power in the U.S. and other imperialist centers, such parties will open the way for a world society free of poverty, national oppression and war.■




WV Photo

**January 2009 NYC protest against Israeli military assault on Gaza, which killed over 1,000 Palestinians.**

# 1948 War...

*(continued from page 2)*

Soviet diplomats saw fit to dwell upon what Stalin had said about "the Soviet Union being ready to meet America and Britain halfway, economic and social differences notwithstanding."...

The Jewish worker having been separated from his Arab colleague and prevented from fighting a common class struggle will be at the mercy of his class enemies, imperialism and the Zionist bourgeoisie. It will be easy to arouse him against his proletarian ally, the Arab worker, "who is depriving him of jobs and depressing the level of wages" (a method that has not failed in the past!). Not in vain has Weitzmann said that "the Jewish state will stem Communist influence." As a compensation, the Jewish worker is bestowed with the privilege of dying a hero's death on the altar of the Hebrew state.

And what promises does the Jewish state hold out? Does it really mean a step toward the solution of the Jewish problem?

The partition was not meant to solve Jewish misery nor is it likely ever to do so. This dwarf of a state which is too small to absorb the Jewish masses cannot even solve the problems of its citizens. The Hebrew state can only infest the Arab East with anti-Semitism and may well turn out—as Trotsky said—a bloody trap for hundreds of thousands of Jews.

The leaders of the Arab League reacted to the decision on partition with speeches full of threats and enthusiasm. As a matter of fact, a Zionist state is to them a godsend from Allah. Calling up the worker and fellah [peasant] for the "holy war to save Palestine" is supposed to stifle their cries for bread, land and freedom. Another time-honored method of diverting an embittered people against the Jewish and communist danger.

In Palestine the feudal rule has of late begun to lose ground. During the war the Arab working class has grown in numbers and political consciousness. Jewish and Arab workers stood up against the foreign oppressor, against whom they together went on strikes. A strong leftist trade union had come into existence; and the "Workers' Association of the Arabs of Palestine" had been well on the way of freeing itself from the influence of the Husseinis. The murder of its leader, Sami Taha, committed by hirelings of the Arab High Committee could not restrain this development. But where the Husseinis failed, the decision of the imperialist agency, the UNO succeeded. The partition decision stifled the class struggle of the Palestine workers. The prospect of being at the hands of the Zionist "conquerors of soil and labor" is arousing fear and anxiety among the Arab workers and fellahs. Nationalist war slogans fall on fertile soil. And feudal murderers see their chance. Thus the policy of partition enables the feudalists to turn back the wheels of history....

The two camps today mobilize the masses under the mask of "self-defense." "We have been attacked, let us defend ourselves!"—say the Zionists. "Let us ward off the danger of a Jewish conquest!"—declares the Arab Higher Committee. Where does the truth lie?

War is the continuation of politics by other means. The war led by the Arab feudalists is but the continuation of their reactionary war on the worker and the fellah who are striving to shake off oppression and exploitation. For the feudal effendis [lords] "Salvation of Palestine" means safeguarding their revenues at the expense of the fellahin, maintaining their autocratic rule in town and country, smashing the proletarian organizations and international class solidarity.

The war waged by the Zionists is the continuation of their expansionist policy based on discrimination between the two peoples: they defend *kibbush avoda* (ousting of Arab labor), *kibbush adama* (ousting of the fellah), boycott of Arab goods, "Hebrew rule." The military conflict is a direct result of the policy of the Zionist conquerors.

This war can on neither side be said to bear a progressive character. The war does not release progressive forces or do away with social and economic obstacles in the path of development of the two nations. Quite the opposite is true. It is apt to obscure the class antagonism and to open the gate for nationalist excesses. ***It weakens the proletariat and strengthens imperialism in both camps.***

Each side is "anti-imperialist" to the bone, busy detecting the reactionary—in the opposite camp. And imperialism is always seen—helping the other side. But this kind of exposure is oil on the imperialist fire. For the inveigling policy of imperialism is based upon agents and agencies within *both* camps. Therefore, we say to the Palestine people in reply to the patriotic warmongers: ***Make this war between Jews and Arabs, which serves the end of imperialism, the common war of both nations against imperialism!***

This is the only solution guaranteeing a real peace. This must be our goal which must be achieved without concessions to the chauvinist mood prevailing at present among the masses.

How can that be done?

"The main enemy is in our own country!"—this was what Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg had to say to the workers when imperialists and social democrats were inciting them to the slaughter of their fellow workers in other countries. In this spirit we say to the Jewish and Arab workers: The enemy is in your ***own camp!***

Jewish workers! Get rid of the Zionist provocateurs who tell you to sacrifice yourself on the altar of the Hebrew state.

Arab worker and fellah! Get rid of the chauvinist provocateurs who are getting you into a mess of blood for their own sake and pocket.

***Workers of the two peoples, unite in a common front against imperialism and its agents!***■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WORKERS VANGUARD

# Down With Fortress Europe's War on Immigrants and Refugees!

EPA photos

Ships carrying over 800 Libyan refugees arrive on island of Lampedusa, Italy, May 7. Right: Detained Tunisian immigrants in Lampedusa protest plans to deport them, April 11.

# Refugees Drown as Imperialists Step Up War on Libya

MILANO—Among the main victims of the imperialist war against Libya have been nearly two million foreign workers in that country. Beginning with the low-level civil war that pitted the bourgeois government of nationalist strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi against an imperialist-backed opposition, up to 750,000 have fled Libya. While most went to Tunisia or Egypt, some 12,000, according to United Nations estimates, have tried to reach Italy or Malta by boat. This is in addition to several thousand Tunisians who had already reached the Italian island of Lampedusa following the downfall of the Ben Ali dictatorship.

The "humanitarian" code words that the imperialists mouthed to prettify their attack on Libya have been belied by the treatment they have meted out to the refugees. The United Nations—the body run by thieves and murderers that gave the green light to the bombings in the name of "defending civilians"—has been compelled to admit that an estimated 1,200 refugees are missing and presumed dead, with horrific eyewitness reports of death by drowning or starvation.

The London *Guardian* (8 May) reported that in late March, 72 people trying to get to Lampedusa died of thirst and hunger while their boat drifted under the eyes of NATO units, including a helicopter and an aircraft carrier. They simply were left to die despite their desperate pleas for help. On April 6, a boat with 350 refugees, including many women and children, sank between Malta and Sicily, killing up to 250. A month later, a vessel with 600 people fleeing Tripoli, which had come under intensified NATO bombing, also sank. In a small sea packed with NATO ships, vessels of the European Union (EU) border agency Frontex and of various Coast Guards and other forces, this cannot be called anything but mass murder. At the same time, NATO ships blockading Libya aid rebel forces transferring military supplies from one coastal city to another. As the captain of one rebel ship told the *New York Times* (23 May), "Nothing crosses without permission from NATO."

Those fleeing North Africa who survive the trip and land in Malta or in southern Italy have been imprisoned under inhuman conditions. Italy's right-wing Berlusconi government initially chose to let them rot for days in Lampedusa, sequestered in the detention center or simply abandoned in the village or on the rocky coast, with no shelter or food. Then it "solved the problem" by packing the immigrants off to military camps on the Italian mainland, mainly in the south.

The government went on to try to force the new Tunisian military regime to accept mass deportations from Italy. Finally, when it became clear that most Tunisians wanted to reach France, where they have relatives or friends, they were granted a temporary permit allowing them to stay for three months, in the hope that they would filter across Italy's northern border. In turn, the Sarkozy government in France reintroduced controls at the Italian border town of Ventimiglia, compelling hundreds of immigrants to wait for days around the local train station. Those who made it to Paris or other parts of France were then targeted by police dragnets for deportation.

The Lega Trotskista d'Italia, along with the Ligue Trotskyste de France, demands: ***Close the detention camps! No deportations! For the right of asylum for all refugees from Libya! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*** In the latest escalation of the NATO war against Libya, France and reportedly Britain are preparing to deploy attack helicopters to step up pressure against Qaddafi's regime and to bolster the sordid opposition. Together with our comrades throughout the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), we call for the military defense of Libya against the imperialists and the opposition forces that are acting as their ground troops, without giving any political support to Qaddafi's bonapartist capitalist regime.

The relatively small influx of immigrants and refugees from North Africa into Italy in the wake of the Tunisian revolt and the war on Libya has been used by capitalist governments all over Europe to wage a hysterical racist campaign, with the aim of further tightening immigration controls in "Fortress Europe" and otherwise augmenting the powers of the bourgeois state. At a meeting in Rome on April 25, Sarkozy and Berlusconi demanded an "in-depth revision" of the Schengen Treaty, which is supposed to allow residents of EU countries to move freely among member countries. On May 12, a meeting of the EU interior ministers resolved to allow the governments to restore border controls, intensify surveillance of Europe's frontiers and re-establish pacts with North African governments to control the flow of immigrants across the Mediterranean. On the same day, the Danish government unilaterally announced it was reinstating police checks at the borders with Germany and Sweden.

Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain are among the poorer EU members that traditionally had been a source of cheap labor for more advanced capitalist countries. But in the last two decades, these states have had to import a huge mass of foreign workers to offset a declining birth rate. This has created a significant layer of the working class that is deprived of citizenship rights and is easy to deport when the economy slows down and jobs dry up. These workers are often victims of murderous racist attacks and are used as scapegoats by the bourgeoisie to derail popular frustration from the real enemy, the capitalist class. At the same time, these new layers of the working class provide a living link to the struggles of the downtrodden masses in the neocolonial world.

With the protracted world economic crisis, the capitalist rulers have pushed racist poison in order to further divide and weaken any resistance by the working class and its trade unions to the sweeping austerity that their governments have imposed (see "Italy: Unions Must Defend and Organize Immigrant Workers!" *WV* No. 961, 2 July 2010). Defense of immigrants against racist repression is a key component of the struggle to defend the lives and wages of all workers. The labor movement must organize immigrant workers and fight for their citizenship rights. But to carry out this crucially important task requires fighting against the chauvinist politics of the pro-capitalist union misleaders, who embrace the national interests of their "own" capitalists. Thus the Italian labor bureaucracy has pushed "Made in Italy" protectionism, which is poison to the class consciousness of the Italian proletariat and a weapon against its class

*continued on page 9*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 982

10 June 2011


## Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

Reuters

Oza/Arizona Republic

# Obama's Crackdown on Immigrants

**Left: Barack Obama and Homeland Security chief Janet Napolitano at El Paso border facility, May 10. Right: I.C.E. agents round up suspected undocumented immigrants in Phoenix, May 25.**

In a May 10 speech in El Paso, Texas, Democratic president Barack Obama boasted that his administration has gone "above and beyond what was requested" by Republicans in jacking up military and police forces at the border and deporting undocumented immigrants. The speech, cast as a call for "comprehensive reform" of a "broken immigration system," helped kick off Obama's 2012 presidential re-election campaign against a Republican Party which, in statehouses in Arizona, Alabama and elsewhere, is pushing a gamut of racist measures targeting immigrants for vicious repression.

Under Obama's watch, the government is deporting on average more than 1,000 immigrants per day, a historical record. "We now have more boots on the ground on the southwest border than at any time in our history," Obama boasted in El Paso. Those federal "boots" are supplemented by neo-Nazis and other armed racist vigilantes who have stationed themselves on the border. In just the first five months of 2010, federal agents killed or wounded 17 immigrants on the Mexican border compared to five killed or wounded in the final year of the Bush administration. Hundreds have perished in the past two years trying to enter the country while avoiding U.S. border guards.

In executing the crackdown on immigration, Obama is simply doing his job as the CEO of American capitalism. In times of economic expansion, undocumented immigrant laborers, deprived of their rights and paid rock-bottom wages, are viewed by the capitalists as useful material to be exploited to the limit of physical endurance. But when capitalism's inevitable economic downturns hit, those workers become an unnecessary overhead to be disposed of through mass deportations. This is certainly the case with the current protracted economic crisis, which has destroyed almost seven million jobs in the U.S. In Europe, the economic crisis has also been accompanied by a stepped-up anti-immigrant offensive. At the moment, the French and Italian governments have been engaged in a racist contest over who can best keep Tunisian and other immigrants from North Africa out of their country.

The domination and intense exploitation of backward countries by the advanced capitalist economies propel ever more of the impoverished and dispossessed to migrate to Europe and North America, even at a time of wholesale destruction of jobs in the imperialist centers. One week after Obama's El Paso speech, Mexican authorities in Chiapas detained two tractor-trailers headed for the U.S. that contained 513 migrants packed like cattle and half dead from suffocation and lack of water. The scene was evocative of the Middle Passage, only it was not slave-traders but hunger that packed them into these potential coffins.

A report issued this month by Oxfam, "The Struggle for a Pro-Poor Food Policy in Guatemala," described the desperate conditions driving that migration. While a tiny domestic elite, working hand in hand with U.S. agribusiness giants, rakes in lavish profits, poor peasants driven from their land are forced to work the plantations for wages far below what is necessary to feed their families, starving themselves to keep their children alive. Even before skyrocketing food prices caused a global hunger crisis three years ago, half of all Guatemalan children under five were malnourished—a figure that rises to 70 percent among Maya and other indigenous peoples. This is a direct result of the workings of the capitalist world market. The most productive land in Guatemala has been taken over by plantations growing cash crops such as sugar cane, coffee and—increasingly—biofuels for export, while this deeply impoverished country increasingly relies on imported staples from the U.S.

AP

**May 17: More than 500 migrants from Latin America and Asia were crammed into two tractor-trailers that were stopped in southern Mexico on way to U.S.**

The U.S. capitalists view Mexico and other countries as vast reservoirs of cheap immigrant labor to be tapped. Defense of immigrant rights is crucial to reversing the decades-long decline of the trade unions. Enlisting immigrant workers, many of whom have a history of militant struggle in their own countries, in the front ranks of the labor movement is an urgent task both to fight the exploitation of the most vulnerable layers of the population and to combat the anti-union onslaught sweeping this country. In undertaking the crucial fight to organize the unorganized, the labor movement must demand that *all* immigrants have immediate and full citizenship rights and must fight against every instance of discrimination, calling for no deportations.

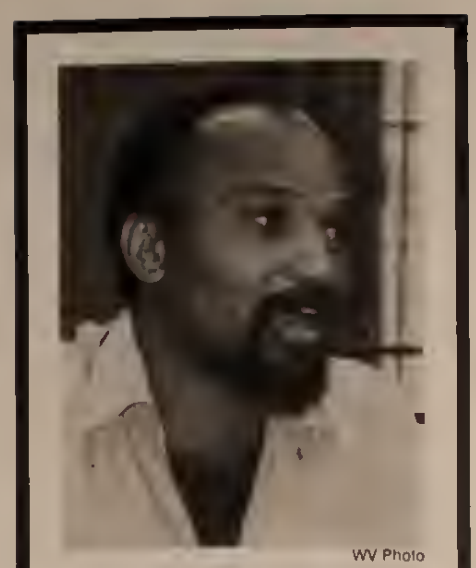
We would support reforms that even partially ameliorate the effects of the bourgeoisie's racist, chauvinist immigration policies. But no such reform is currently on offer. As Marxists, we do not seek to advise the bourgeoisie on its immigration or other policies. Our aim is to win the working class to the understanding that it must oppose the whole capitalist system. It is only through the victory of world socialist revolution that scarcity can be abolished for good, laying the basis for the withering away of the state and therefore of borders and immigration laws.

### Democrats' Bogus "Reform" Plan

We've heard Obama's talk of "comprehensive reform" before. George W. Bush served up the same menu: more

*continued on page 4*

# Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt)


WV Photo

**1947–2011**

Geronimo ji Jaga, a former leader of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in Los Angeles, died at his home in Tanzania on June 3 at the age of 63. The cause of death is not known at this time. From 1970 to 1997, Geronimo was America's foremost class-war prisoner, trapped in prison hell after being framed up by the LAPD and FBI for a murder they knew he did not commit. Eight of his 27 years in prison were spent in solitary confinement. Throughout his imprisonment, Geronimo remained unbroken and committed to the cause of freedom for the oppressed.

Born Elmer Gerard Pratt, Geronimo grew up in KKK-infested southern Louisiana. He told *WV*: "The Klan killed a friend of mine. I think we were about nine or ten, swimming in the Atchafalaya River" ("Geronimo Pratt Speaks from San Quentin," *WV* No. 382, 28 June 1985). His first jailing came at age 11 or 12, "for speaking to a white woman," which "I didn't even do because I grew up down there. I knew the rules." With few job opportunities, at age 17 Geronimo joined the Army, serving two tours of duty in Vietnam, where he became a highly decorated paratrooper. After his first tour, Geronimo was sent to Detroit to help put down the 1967 ghetto rebellion. He recalled that his unit, 60-70 percent black, was supportive of the besieged ghetto, so "immediately they pulled us out of there." He was then sent back to Vietnam.

Like many veterans, Geronimo was radicalized by the Vietnam War. After returning to racist America, he sought in the Panthers the vehicle to place his military experience at the service of the black freedom struggle. Along with Robert F. Williams and the Deacons for Defense, the Panthers rejected the turn-the-other-cheek pacifism of Martin Luther King Jr. and advocated armed self-defense. Geronimo immediately became a prime target of the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), in which 38 Panthers were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on trumped-up charges. One FBI memo spelled out, "Operation Number One is designed to challenge the legitimacy of the authority exercised by ELMER GERARD PRATT, BPP Deputy Minister of Defense." On 8 December 1969, over 140 LAPD cops attacked the Panther headquarters where Geronimo lived. He survived the five-hour barrage but was later convicted on a minor weapons charge.

Geronimo was subsequently charged with the 1968 murder of Caroline Olsen in Santa Monica. He was convicted in 1972 on the perjured testimony of Julius Butler, an informant for the LAPD, FBI and District Attorney's office, and sentenced to life in prison. Geronimo was nowhere near the scene of the killing. As early as 1985, former FBI agent Wesley Swearingen revealed the existence of wiretaps showing that when Olsen was killed, Geronimo was 400 miles away in Oakland, attending a heavily surveilled and wiretapped BPP leadership meeting. But because of bloody factional division fueled by COINTELPRO, no Panther leader except for Kathleen Cleaver testified on his behalf.

For refusing to confess guilt to a crime he did not commit, Geronimo was denied parole *16 times*. To justify one such rejection, L.A. prosecutor Diane Vezzani declared that Geronimo was "still a revolutionary." In the late 1980s, Geronimo played a pivotal role in enlisting the support of other former Panthers in the fight for freedom for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, which helped publicize Mumia's case more broadly. In 1999, Geronimo endorsed the Partisan Defense Committee-initiated anti-KKK mobilization in New York City. In 2002, he endorsed an Oakland united-front protest against the USA Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act that was initiated by the PDC and Labor Black League for Social Defense.

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee long fought for Geronimo's freedom. Geronimo epitomized our characterization of the Black Panther Party as the best of a generation of black militants who sought a revolutionary road to black equality. But the Panthers' black nationalist perspective and program doomed them to isolation in the ghetto, cut off from the only road out of the nightmare of racist American capitalism: integrated working-class struggle led to victory by a revolutionary vanguard party.

Geronimo was able to find some years of contentment after settling in Tanzania. But we are bitter that over half his adult life was stolen from him, spent in prison under conditions that undoubtedly exacerbated his health problems and likely contributed to his untimely death. He will be missed!■

TROTSKY

LENIN

### Only Workers Revolution Will Put an End to Capitalist Crises

*In the depths of the Great Depression in 1934, and following Hitler's taking power in Germany, fascists in France attempted a coup, which spurred the working class into political and strike action. Polemicizing against the false concept that capitalism would generate its own final crisis, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky emphasized the need for the overthrow of the capitalist system by a class-conscious proletariat led by a revolutionary party.*

Under the domination of industrial capital, in the era of free competition, the cyclical booms exceeded by far the crises: the first were the "rule," the second the "exception." Capitalism in its entirety was advancing. Since the war, with the domination of monopoly finance capital, the cyclical crises far exceed the upswings. We may say that the crises have become the "rule" and the booms the "exception"; economic development in its entirety has been going down and not up....

The revolutionary worker must, before all else, understand that Marxism, the only scientific theory of the proletarian revolution, has nothing in common with the fatalistic hope for the "final" crisis. Marxism is, in its very essence, a set of directives for revolutionary action. Marxism does not overlook will and courage, but rather helps them to find the right road.

There is no crisis that can be, by itself, fatal to capitalism. The oscillations of the business cycle only create a situation in which it will be easier, or more difficult, for the proletariat to overthrow capitalism. The transition from a bourgeois society to a socialist society presupposes the activity of living people who are the makers of their own history. They do not make history by accident, or according to their caprice, but under the influence of objectively determined causes. However, their own actions—their initiative, audacity, devotion, and likewise their stupidity and cowardice—are necessary links in the chain of historical development.

The crises of capitalism are not numbered, nor is it indicated in advance which one of these will be the "last." But our entire epoch and, above all, the present crisis imperiously command the proletariat: "Seize power!" If, however, the party of the working class, in spite of favorable conditions, reveals itself incapable of leading the proletariat to the seizure of power, the life of society will continue necessarily upon capitalist foundations—until a new crisis, a new war, perhaps until the complete disintegration of European civilization.

—Leon Trotsky, "Once Again, Whither France?" March 1935,
printed in *Leon Trotsky on France* (1979)


**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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The closing date for news in this issue is June 7.

**No. 982** **10 June 2011**


## *Editorial Note*

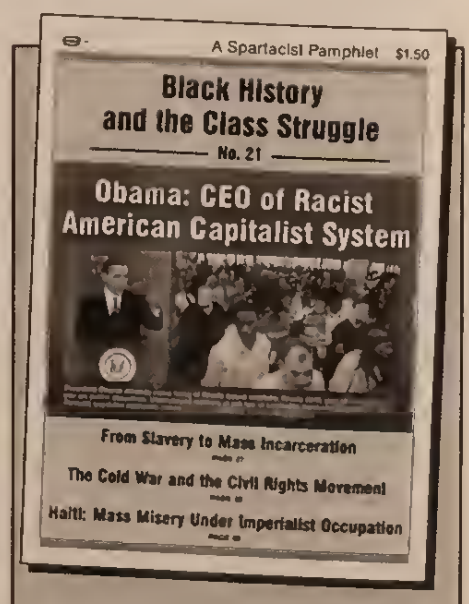
# Memorial Day: Ghosts of Confederacy in Brooklyn

On Memorial Day, Green-Wood Cemetery officials in Brooklyn hosted a day of remembrance for *both* sides in the Civil War. This event was part of a weeks-long propaganda campaign to glorify the pro-slavery forces by enshrining their supposed noble "sacrifice." This gross, racist provocation should repulse any decent anti-racist fighter, anyone who takes up the cause of the working class.

During the Civil War—which the *Daily News* (29 May) referred to as "divisive"—New York City was a hotbed of pro-secessionist sentiment. This was mainly driven by the material interests of merchants who were an indispensable link in the chain of circulation of the goods and services wrenched from the blood, sweat and tears of black slaves. In the Civil War, the last great bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Northern bourgeoisie as a whole, in following its own class interests, abolished chattel slavery and destroyed the old Southern plantation agricultural system. After the war, the Northern capitalists betrayed the promise of black freedom and formed an alliance with the remnants of the slavocracy in order to exploit Southern resources and the freedmen.

We will not forgive, nor will we forget. While Memorial Day today celebrates bloody U.S. imperialism, we point to the first Memorial Day (then known as Decoration Day), initiated by emancipated blacks in honor of the Union dead. On 1 May 1865, in liberated Charleston, South Carolina, nearly 10,000 former slaves marched on the grounds of the old Washington Race Course and Jockey Club, prewar bastion of the planter elite. During the war, the racecourse was turned into a hellish prison camp, where hundreds of Union soldiers died of disease and were buried in a mass grave behind the grandstand. After black workmen buried the dead properly on the grounds, 3,000 black schoolchildren marched past the graves, softly singing "John Brown's Body" and laying flowers. Several Union regiments joined the march, including the 104th and 35th Colored regiments, as well as the famous 54th Massachusetts, commemorated in the movie *Glory*.

The Civil War will be finished when there is a socialist America, the only way to achieve black liberation. To hell with the "national reconciliation" pushed by the capitalist press, right-wing and "liberal" alike. We stand for implacable class struggle to smash the racist capitalist system and the rule of the bloody imperialist oppressors, who from Baghdad to Kabul to Brooklyn are daily, and increasingly, tightening the chains on the oppressed and exploited.■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# NYC: Anti-Smoking Totalitarianism

## Bloomberg Butt Out!

A pack of Marlboro Lights costs a cool $12 in Manhattan. Smokers have been driven from every office, worksite and public building, from bars and restaurants, left to shiver on the street in the winter and swelter in the sun of a New York summer. But this is not enough for New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council, which have now banned smoking on beaches and in parks and plazas, imposing a $50 fine on anyone caught doing so. What's next: home invasions of suspected smokers or Prohibition-style raids on private parties allowing smoking? This is already a reality elsewhere in the country, as in Belmont, California, where it is now illegal to smoke in your own home. As CBS News (28 January 2009) put it: "If apartment building neighbors complain about a smoker next door, officers can come knocking."

Bloomberg's latest assault on smokers has an extra twist: it's meant to "be enforced by public pressure," as well as by some Parks Department personnel (*Daily News*, 12 February). In this scenario, if some anti-smoking fanatic catches you "in the act" and lectures you to cease and desist, and if you respond by telling them to mind their own business, they can run to the nearest person in uniform. Imagine the possibilities: grouchy old people finking on teenagers having a good time (or vice versa), racist yahoos targeting minority families on a picnic, anti-sex bigots turning in gay people taking in some sun. It's going to be open season on anyone who has the temerity to light up, with all the class, race and sex prejudices imbedded in this capitalist society. In a hot, humid summer in New York, this totalitarian mobilization of anti-smoking citizen brigades to act on behalf of the state is a recipe for violent attacks by bigots.

Already, discrimination against smokers in housing is open and rampant. A look at "no smoking" listings on Craigslist shows what smokers looking to rent apartments face. Official acts of repression and the vigilantism of the self-appointed morals police reinforce each other.

Even the *New York Times* (4 February), an enthusiastic supporter of the various bans imposed on smokers in the city, has, for its own reasons (like wanting to maintain healthy tourism income), recoiled from the latest ban, editorializing that the mayor and City Council had "overreached." It noted that: "Instead of smoking on Brighton Beach, what does a smoker do—take a boat out 12 nautical miles into international waters?... They need to take a deep breath and remember that we tried prohibition 90 years ago. They called it a noble experiment. It turned into a civic disaster." As we've noted before, during Prohibition nine states banned tobacco as well as booze. Is Gotham, once mythologized as the center of cosmopolitan culture where the lucky few led the high life with scandalous abandon, now to be remade in the image of Puritan Salem?

This latest intrusion by the state was well-prepared and in the making for some time. "Cleaning up" the city one civil right at a time, former mayor Ed Koch passed the "Clean Indoor Air Act," opening the crusade to outlaw smoking in practically every indoor area imaginable. At the time we remarked: "How grotesque—New York City currently leads the U.S. in carbon monoxide pollution and barely escaped a multimillion-dollar cutoff of federal monies last year by the notoriously lax Environmental Protection Agency... and they want to blame the smoker for the rotten air quality in the Big Apple!" ("Warning: Anti-Smoking Crusade Dangerous to Your Rights," *WV* No. 453, 20 May 1988). Then, Rudolph Giuliani and the Democratic Party-controlled City Council pushed through the smoking bans in restaurants, convention centers and work locations. Even outdoor cafés had to cordon off smokers, doubtless to keep the health-conscious from having their bracing intake of noxious traffic fumes contaminated by a whiff of their neighbors' smoke. Other laws under Giuliani unleashed citywide dragnets against such "crimes" as drinking a beer on a stoop.

Overwhelmingly, it's working people and the poor who are targeted when the state gets into people's business. Take, for example, "sin taxes" on tobacco, which boost the cost of cigarettes by a factor of four or five. But the smoking bans, like the imposition of random drug and alcohol tests on workers, are also part and parcel of a broad-gauged campaign of regimenting the population, cracking down on workers' rights, increasing productivity (those three-minute breaks add up!) and just simple random cruelty. Leading the charge to demonize smokers were the "me first" yuppies who infest most parts of Manhattan, jacking up rents and spreading the misery of whatever latest health fad they've adopted. The Hitler Youth used to be for clean living, too, as the Nazis raised the rallying call for "social purification" in the face of capitalist collapse and economic desperation.

Capitalist collapse and economic desperation will ring a bell for many in New York City, and throughout the country. As the jobless and homeless numbers swell, Wall Street swells have not given up their cigars and brandy, to be sure. And while the fat cats who brought the world economy to the present disaster flourish, billionaire Bloomberg's extension of the smoking bans to outdoor summer gathering spots is especially vindictive toward the working class and black and Latino population of the city.

This is the same guy who tried to blame his snow removal fiasco on unionized workers during last winter's blizzards (see "Beat Back Attack on Public Workers Unions!" *WV* No. 972, 21 January). Now he's attacking firefighters as well, setting out a plan to shut down 20 engine companies. Taking a moment from his onslaught on the people who actually do an honest day's work to keep this city running, Bloomberg evidently decided that his forerunners' attacks on the rights of residents fell short on the smoking front. So now transit workers who are exposed to steel dust and bus and truck fumes day in and day out can't have a smoke while spending their well-deserved day off at the beach; firemen who risk their lives in burning buildings can't light up in a nearby plaza; the doctors, nurses and other hospital workers who fight to care for patients despite the health care giants' cost-cutting aren't allowed to take a smoke break in the park.

Enough! As we wrote in "Bourgeois Hypocrisy and 'Health Fascism': Anti-Smoking Tyranny" (*WV* No. 612, 9 December 1994):

> "This creeping 'health fascism' has nothing to do with the public's welfare. Medical evidence on the effects of 'secondary smoke' is inconclusive, and the obvious solution is to provide adequate ventilation for everybody. But that isn't profitable, so of course it's not even seriously proposed.... In the meantime, millions of people have been killed off through malnutrition, inadequate medical care and other effects of poverty, while billions of dollars are poured into building more prisons. In a rational, socialist society that money will be spent to find cures for cancer and other diseases, clean up the cities and provide decent housing, education and medical care for all.
>
> "As far as we're concerned, people ought to be able to read, eat, drink, smoke, and enjoy whatever consensual activities they want without cops, courts, employers and yuppie totalitarians sticking their noses in."

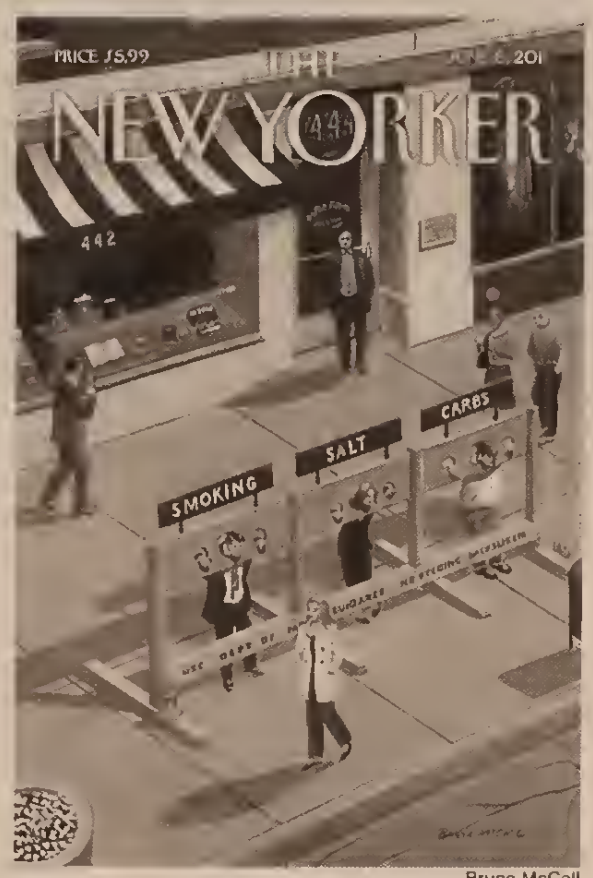
While unemployment and hunger devastate working people's lives and health, while killer cutbacks close hospitals and schools, while tenement housing makes poor kids sick with everything from asthma to lead poisoning, now Bloomberg proposes families won't be able to use their food stamps for sugar-sweetened beverages. We militantly defend people's right to imbibe still-legal substances, like steak, alcohol and cigarettes. We oppose all laws against so-called "crimes without victims"—drugs, gambling, prostitution. These laws threaten the privacy and rights of everyone and should be ***abolished***. As Billie Holiday sang: "Ain't nobody's business if I do."

Even when the smoking bans applied mostly to indoor areas, there was no evidence that secondary smoke endangered nonsmokers. In the great (polluted) outdoors of New York City, this notion is simply ludicrous. Despite earlier absurd denials by the tobacco industry, it's not a big secret that cigarettes aren't healthy for those who use them. As for those who don't, but are merely "exposed" to those who do, ***nothing*** has been scientifically proved to show that they suffer from secondhand smoke.

Much of the ballyhoo dates back to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report (*Respiratory Effects of Passive Smoking*, December 1992) that claimed to deduce a correlation—based on 31 extant studies—between exposure to smoke and a "19 percent" higher risk of lung cancer, particularly in the case of nonsmoking wives of smokers. Yet almost none of the results can be considered statistically significant. In fact, nine out of the 31 studies showed a negative correlation between secondary smoke and lung cancer. As for the 19 percent figure, a number this low in such a study could be explained by anything from pure chance to previous family history. For smokers, by comparison, where a connection is clear, the increased incidence of lung cancer was on the order of ***2,000 percent***. This concocted report, by the way, came from the same government agency that nine years later would tell residents of lower Manhattan that the air around Ground Zero was fit to breathe one week after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, even as the site was burning and releasing highly toxic particles.

Subsequent major studies that tried to find a health risk from secondhand smoke had to reach the same conclusion: there is no statistically meaningful correlation. Several sources have exposed the unscientific ways in which such studies are conducted in the first place, from not controlling for the effects of urban pollution to basing their conclusions on people's estimates of how much secondhand smoke they have been exposed to over the course of their lives (see, for example, "The Bogus 'Science' of Secondhand Smoke," *Washington Post*, 30 January 2007).

Karl Marx, who scientifically laid bare the workings of this vicious capitalist system, wrote concerning English liquor laws: "The classical saints of Christianity mortified ***their*** body for the salvation of the souls of the masses; the modern, educated saints mortify ***the bodies of the masses*** for the salvation of their own souls" ("Anti-Church Movement," June 1855). Like Marx, we draw the conclusion that only the victory of proletarian revolution and establishment of workers rule will put an end to the hideous exploitation and oppression of the working masses. In the course of such a fight, it is necessary to struggle against the ever-growing regimentation of the population for greater profits and productivity, for cannon fodder in imperialist wars and occupations. Workers (including those who smoke): you have nothing to lose but your chains! ■



Bruce McCall

**Cover of *New Yorker* (6 June) got it right.**

**NOTICE**

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**Our next issue will be dated July 8.**


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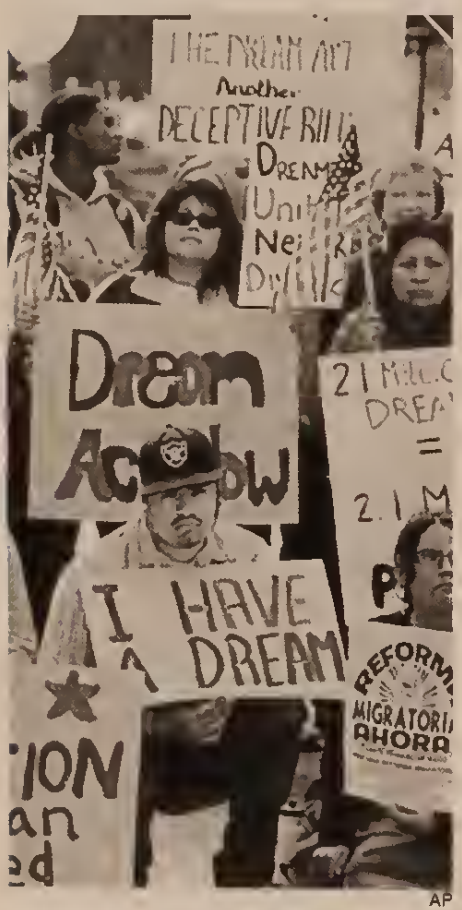
# Immigrants...

*(continued from page 1)*

militarization of the border, a "guest worker" program amounting to indentured servitude, a torturous "legalization" process for a few, with the rest considered criminals. In El Paso, Obama refused activists' pleas to turn a blind eye to the law and stop deporting high school students and other immigrants with no criminal records, intoning "that's not how a democracy works." This is how capitalist democracy works: the government, whoever heads it, acts as the executive committee for managing the affairs of the capitalist ruling class as a whole.

The Obama administration has drastically expanded the "Secure Communities" program, now operating in all but eight states, which was initiated under Bush. Under Secure Communities, any person jailed, no matter how minor the alleged crime, has his or her fingerprints checked against federal immigration records for possible deportation or indefinite detention. Tens of thousands have been deported as a result of this dragnet. Most either have no criminal record or were busted for traffic infractions, misdemeanors or drug possession, which should not be a crime to begin with. But innocence is not the point! Every undocumented immigrant is a criminal in the eyes of the state.

In California alone, from the beginning of its participation in Secure Communities in May 2009 through the end of March 2011, fingerprinting resulted in nearly 30,000 deportations, almost 40 percent of the national total. Massachusetts and New York, as well as many local police departments, are trying to opt out of the program, complaining that it detracts from catching "real criminals" and undercuts cops' attempts to get information from Latinos and others. At bottom, this dispute is over how best to enforce racist capitalist rule.




AP

**November 2010 protest at California's Fresno State University. Dream Act bolsters U.S. imperialist military in name of "path to citizenship" for immigrant youth.**

The E-Verify employment database and audits of employers' I-9 forms, which are meant to confirm workers' legal status, are also expanding. In less than three years, the Obama administration has carried out more workplace audits than were made during the entire two-term Bush administration. Where the Bush regime reveled in unleashing I.C.E. agents on workplaces, the Obama regime puts a premium on the "efficiency" of "desktop raids." Immigrant families have been ravaged, as the breadwinners are thrown out of their jobs with few prospects of employment anywhere.

Even as it attacks immigrant rights and union gains, the Democratic Party makes a pretense of standing for working people, blacks and immigrants. The openly anti-labor Republicans promote undisguised racist bigotry as they try to one-up Obama in bashing immigrants. Last year all eyes were on Arizona, where the Republican-controlled state legislature passed the infamous SB1070 law mandating that cops arrest anyone who fails to show them their immigration papers or proof of citizenship. This made it open season on any Latino, and anyone else who might look "foreign." The law also prohibits anyone from transporting or giving shelter to undocumented immigrants.

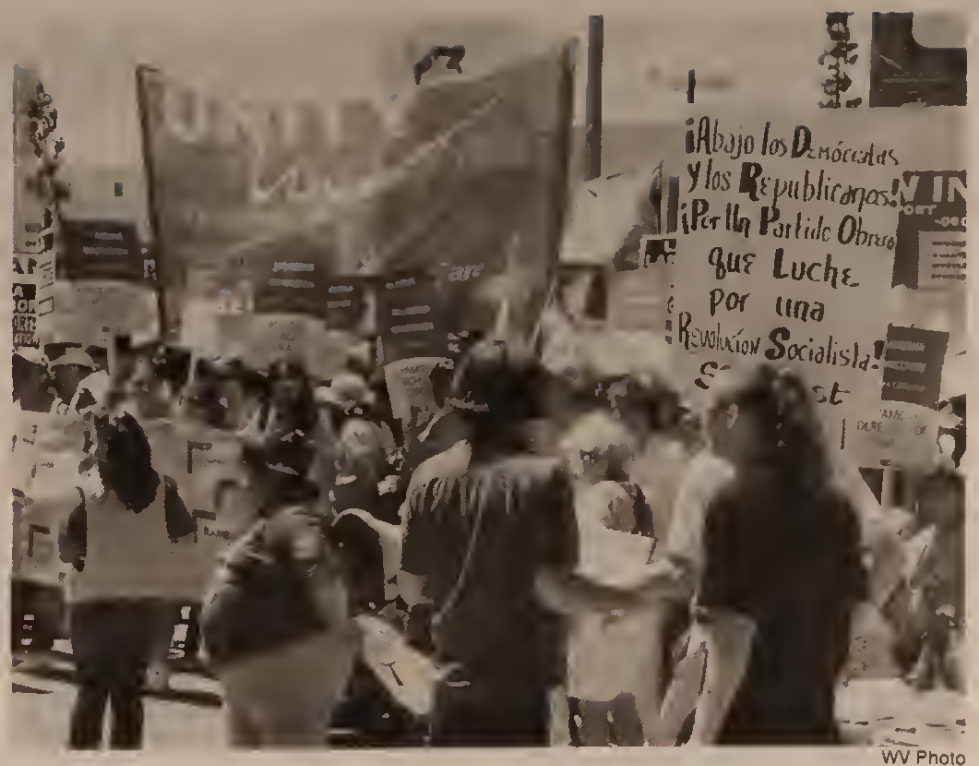
In just the first three months of 2011, state legislatures enacted scores of laws targeting non-citizens. Most recently, the Republican-dominated Alabama state legislature pushed through a bill that goes even further than Arizona's apartheid measure, banning all undocumented students from public colleges and ordering parents to report their kids' immigration status to their schools. The Republicans' "drive 'em all out" rhetoric and vicious state laws allow Obama's Democrats to posture as friends of immigrants, much like the proverbial "good cop" postures as a "friend" to the bloodied prisoner in the interrogation cell: Work with me now, because if I leave the next guy will be much worse.

The Republicans and the Democrats differ only over how to most effectively administer the system of capitalist exploitation. Democratic Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez—a darling of liberals and reformist "socialists"—is trying to get the White House to throw a bone to immigrants instead of just kicking them in the teeth all the time. This is simply part of the deception practiced by the Democrats. A key component to an "immigration reform" bill he put forward in 2009 was a plan to beef up "border security" even further, a call for greater repression that could only lead to more deaths of immigrants. As a representative of the liberal wing of the capitalist class enemy, Gutierrez is merely the sugar coating on the same poison pill of bourgeois party politics.

Undermining the ability of the unions to defend immigrant workers, the bureaucracies of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win federations fully support the Democratic Party, of which the labor bureaucrats are themselves a part. The leadership of the SEIU service workers, a union with a large, dynamic immigrant component, was an early proponent of the "guest worker" scheme. In a May 10 press release, the SEIU brass applauded Obama's El Paso speech and "the enormous security improvements that have been made along the border in recent years." Accepting the capitalist profit system, the labor traitors seek only to tinker with its regulation of labor and its methods of repression.

To revitalize the labor movement will require hard class struggle, on its own behalf and on behalf of all those ground down by capitalism. This means fighting against the racial and ethnic divisions long sown by the capitalist rulers to divide and weaken labor. Native-born workers, black and white, must be won to the defense of immigrant rights, while immigrant workers must understand the crucial importance of fighting against black oppression, a cornerstone of American capitalism. The importance of working-class unity in struggle was shown by the union organizing victory at the Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, in 2008, when the overwhelmingly immigrant and black workforce fought against attempts by the bosses, backed up by *la migra*, to drive a wedge between them.

In the course of renewed labor struggle, the need to break the unions' ties to the Democratic Party and to forge a new labor leadership committed to the political independence of the working class will be posed pointblank. The Spartacist League is committed to building a revolutionary workers party that will champion all the exploited and the oppressed—black and white, native-born and immigrant—in the fight for a workers government.




WV Photo

**May 1: Spartacist sign at L.A. immigrant rights demonstration reads: "Down With the Democrats and the Republicans! For a Workers Party That Fights for Sociallst Revolution!"**

## Dream Act: Trap for Immigrant Youth

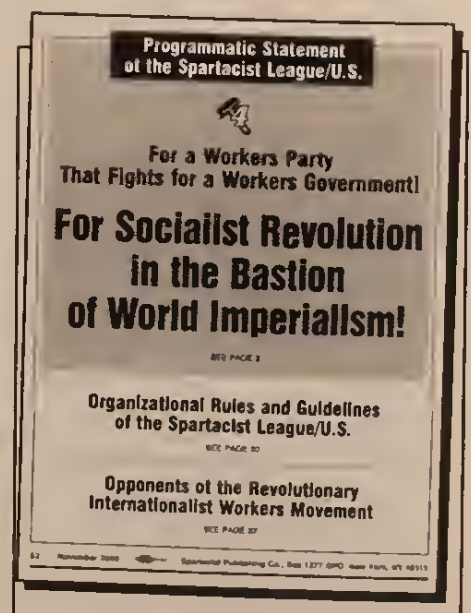
Many immigrant rights activists and students have focused their efforts on the campaign to pass the Dream Act, which Democratic Congressmen reintroduced on May 12 after it was rejected last December. Obama made clear in El Paso that this was on the agenda again, after which AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka dutifully chimed in with his own appeal to pass the law. If passed, the Dream Act would allow a certain number of undocumented youth to apply for conditional residency papers. After completing two years of either college or military service, these youth could petition for permanent residency. While the Dream Act is promoted and commonly viewed as a means to let immigrants attend college without fear of deportation, this is a smokescreen for its major purpose, which is to provide a recruiting tool for the imperialist military.

Out of an estimated 65,000 immigrant youth subject to deportation who graduate from high school each year, at most one-fifth go on to college. And as tuition costs keep rising, the Act would still bar these students' access to Pell Grants. It is clear that military service would be the most likely route taken by the vast majority of those eligible. Currently estimated at 280,000 youth, those eligible for the Dream Act would provide a huge pool of potential military recruits. The Pentagon thus had every reason to enthusiastically endorse the Dream Act. And as proletarian opponents of imperialist militarism, we Marxists have every reason to oppose it. Down with the Dream Act! Not one man or woman, not one penny for the imperialist military! The universities should be open to everyone: For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid stipend for students!

The same reformist left groups that built an "antiwar movement" to fight against "Bush's war" in Iraq have jumped on the Democrats' bandwagon in support of this pro-military measure. Workers World Party leader Teresa Gutierrez mused in a 16 December 2010 *Workers World* editorial that the Dream Act would be "a step forward for the movement defending immigrant rights." This is despite her worry that "it would be the height of cruel imperialist irony if those same youth are forced to go to Arizona or California to turn their guns on the migrant workers attempting to cross the U.S./Mexican border, many of whom could be members of their very own families." No doubt! After the Dream Act failed to pass last December, the Party for Socialism and Liberation wrote in its newspaper *Liberation* (26 December 2010) that "the Dream Act would have addressed a grave injustice." Complaining only that the bill "did not go far enough," the article did not raise a hint of criticism of the bill's military component.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) noted in a 17 September 2010 editorial posted on socialistworker.org that it had opposed the Dream Act in 2005-2006, as did the "left wing of the immigrant rights movement," which saw it as a "diversion" at the time. This was when immigrant rights protests had begun to erupt, presenting the ISO with an opportunity to help build a (pro-Democrat) "mass movement." While those protests brought out large numbers of immigrants and a good number of trade unionists as well, they were politically in the grip of the Democratic Party. And indeed, as the Democrats won control of Congress in 2006 and the White House two years later, the protests greatly diminished. In its September 2010 statement, the crassly opportunist ISO explains that it underwent a change of heart. As the campaign for the Dream Act was the only game in town and a lot of immigrant students wanted it, the ISO declared its support, with a few muted criticisms.

That these reformists have latched on to a Pentagon program might give their more critical followers some pause. In fact, their embrace of the Dream Act is an expression of the "politics of the possible," in this case helping to bolster the armed might of U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of all the world's exploited and oppressed. Whatever their social weight, the reformists act as obstacles in the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party, the indispensable instrument to organize the social power of the proletariat to smash the system of capitalist imperialism and establish workers rule. ■

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# Economic Crisis and the Tunisia Uprising

*The following is based on a report given by a comrade of the Ligue Trotskyste de France to a recent gathering of International Communist League members in Europe.*

The reason the various uprisings that have been shaking the Arab world have taken place now and not five, ten or 20 years ago has, in my opinion, economic origins. The devastation of the world depression has added to a situation that had caused steady deterioration in the living conditions for the working masses of North Africa in the last 15 years or so, as seen especially in the huge rise in food prices and the slashing back of government food subsidies. The worsening of their conditions was caused by the adoption of IMF-dictated structural measures beginning in the 1980s and then various agreements, mainly between the European Union (EU) and North African countries, in the second part of the 1990s. This development needs to be traced in part to the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union.

The bottom line of the agreements was based on the imperialists' promise that the European capitalists would outsource part of their industry to the countries of the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia). In reality, the domestic markets of these Arab countries are too small to draw massive foreign investment. Furthermore, industrial production outsourced from the European Union for export back to Europe was moved in large part to the capitalist sector in the Chinese deformed workers state. There is some spare parts production for the auto and aerospace industry in Tunisia, but the bulk of the export-oriented industry is cheap textile production with little value added.

The aim of the agreements was to dismantle tariff barriers between both sides of the Mediterranean and to do away with whatever minimal labor legislation had been in place. In fact, this process started first in Tunisia, and this is the country where it went furthest. So it is not a coincidence that the uprisings started in Tunisia.

This "neoliberalism" has left a devastated economy in North Africa. Of course, there are variations depending in particular on the presence or not of an important oil industry. Algeria is a major producer of oil and gas with significant production potential. However, heavy industry in Algeria, which had been built in the 1970s, has been largely dismantled. Steel production was downsized and then sold to Mittal Steel, among others. In general, from Morocco to Syria between 12 and 15 percent of the population is employed in industry, including light industry. The one exception is Tunisia, where the figure is above 20 percent.

The question of the impact of outsourcing on the strength of the working class and the trade unions is very relevant to North Africa. Labor regulations have been largely dismantled. There is a growing number of workers employed informally, through labor contractors, etc., including in the so-called "formal sector." The head of the Tunisian high school teachers union told *Informations Ouvrières* (21 April), newspaper of the Lambertist Parti Ouvrier Indépendant:

> "The great majority of the mobilizations demand a solution to the fundamental problem, which is employment and was a central demand of the revolution. There are very few strikes which raise the question of wage increases, even though this problem is far from negligible in many companies which do not respect any regulations and laws and underpay their workers. Most mobilizations want to end two plagues: outsourcing and temporary work."

Representative of the growth of the informal sector proper was Mohamed Bouazizi, the street vendor who set himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid in December, sparking the revolt.

There are also demographic reasons, which have come to a head in this period. After independence in the 1950s and 1960s, there was an explosive population growth due to the improvement of health systems. From around 1974 on, mass emigration to Europe was cut off as the European countries tightened their borders. While the life expectancy of the working class increased, the mass influx of youth provoked an explosion of the population able to work and consequently an explosion in structural mass unemployment rates.

This has been aggravated for college-educated youth. The governments in the Maghreb, particularly Tunisia, made a major effort to educate their youth. In the years after independence, when the development of national capitalism was based on a strong state sector and a significant teaching and health apparatus, the natural employment perspectives for college-educated youth were centered on the civil service. This has been increasingly reversed in the last 15 years or so, particularly as a result of IMF- and EU-dictated measures to reduce the public sector. As a result, the unemployment rate *increases* with the level of education. Even before the recent uprisings, it was due to reach catastrophic proportions in the next two or three years. Some 70,000 additional college graduates are scheduled to enter the labor market this fall, a large part of whom will be unemployed.

Since January, the situation in Tunisia has been made worse by the return of 20,000 Tunisians who had jobs in Libya and by foreign refugees from Libya, and has been aggravated as well by the catastrophic situation of the tourist industry, which is a major employer. People have tried to cross the sea and get to France, with hundreds of youth drowned (see "Refugees Drown as Imperialists Step Up War on Libya," *WV* No. 981, 27 May). Now there are concentrations of Tunisian youth in the streets of Paris and Marseilles desperately looking for housing and jobs and trying to avoid police roundups. The IMF and World Bank have started to draw circles around Tunisia, with promises of loans to supposedly bridge the currently dire situation. As always in such circumstances, and as cruelly experienced right now by Greek, Irish and Portuguese workers, these schemes amount to channeling more fresh money into bank coffers and imposing more drastic austerity measures on workers.

In the last 15 years, the social security and unemployment compensation systems, which were basic at best, have been partially dismantled, so that insecurity at all levels has increased. In this context, it is quite remarkable that the working class has managed to appear as a factor at all in Tunisia, although of course not as a class for itself—i.e., conscious of its role as the gravedigger of capitalism. The working class remains chained to its own bourgeoisie by the trade-union bureaucracy and the small left groups that have emerged out of it lately, particularly the former Communist Party, called Ettajdid, the ex-Maoist Workers Communist Party of Tunisia (PCOT) and the ex-Pabloite League of the Workers Left (see "For Permanent Revolution Across North Africa! Tunisia: Dictator Flees, Protests Continue," *WV* No. 973, 4 February).

AFP

**27 December 2010 Tunis demonstration, part of wave of protests against unemployment and wretched living conditions that led to ouster of dictator Ben Ali.**

Tunisia is supposedly the most advanced country in the Arab world when it comes to the status of women. The wives of both the late Habib Bourguiba, the country's first ruler after independence from France, and the ousted dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali played important political roles, which is unique. People came from all over North Africa and the Arabian peninsula because prostitution in Tunisia was not illegal. Prostitutes were said to fink on their customers for the files of the political police. Polygamy was illegal, unlike abortion and contraception.

But the reality is of course quite grim. Arranged marriages are frequent, at least in the bourgeoisie. They still have magic rituals called the *tasfih* to supposedly protect the virginity of pubescent girls, particularly in the more backward interior of the country but also in Tunis. Hymenoplasty (surgical restoration of the hymen to give the appearance of virginity) and the like seem to be common among the more petty-bourgeois layers. Sexual harassment at work is frequent.

However, it appears that the ICL has been the only organization that has been prominently raising the woman question. In Egypt, the left capitulates to the Muslim Brotherhood. In Tunisia, left groups are also into class-collaborationist alliances with the Islamists. They portray them as "good guy" Islamists like Turkey's ruling bourgeois Justice and Development Party. But I believe that a more important part of the reason why the Tunisian left has been silent on the woman question is because they are at bottom left-Bourguibists, and it was Bourguiba who established the family code immediately after independence. They believe that Tunisia is truly a progressive country regarding the woman question. They believe, as Obama would say, that 90 percent of the road has been traveled already toward the final emancipation of women. Skillfully, the government has announced compulsory sexual parity in the lists for elections to the constituent assembly. Slates not complying with this rule would be automatically eliminated.

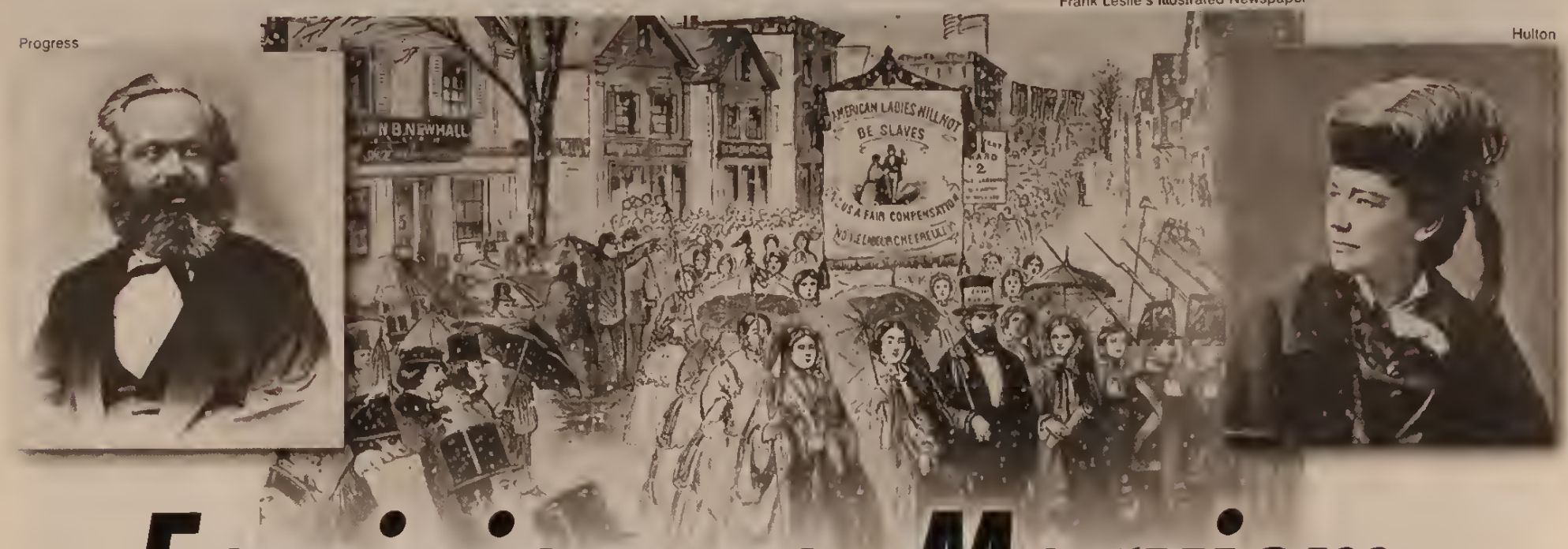
This brings me to the pervasiveness of bourgeois nationalism. From the meetings of the Tunisian left in Paris that we have attended to the mass rallies in downtown Tunis, the national anthem has been sung and the national flag waved. The opportunist left has built illusions in the army, even without the Egyptian mythology of defense of the fatherland against Zionist Israel. As we have said, the ideology of the reformist left used to be the class-collaborationist line of "two stages" toward socialism, which has always ended in bloody defeat for the working class. Now it is one stage, toward a "democratic republic," i.e., bourgeois democracy full stop. As we wrote regarding North Africa and the Near East in the February *WV* article on Tunisia:

> "What is essential is the forging of revolutionary workers parties like the Bolshevik Party that led the working class of Russia to power in the 1917 October Revolution—parties committed to the program of permanent revolution, addressing the burning needs of the masses and unalterably leading them to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat. This is the program of the International Communist League. ***For a socialist federation of North Africa!***" ■

AP

**May 5: Tunisian migrants detained by French police in southern France.**

# Young Spartacus




# Feminism vs. Marxism: Origins of the Conflict

## From *Women and Revolution*, 1974

**Eight hundred striking women shoemakers followed by 4,000 workmen march in Lynn, Massachusetts, March 1860. Left inset: Karl Marx. Right: Victoria Woodhull.**

*We reprint below an article with minor corrections from the Spring 1974 issue of* Women and Revolution *(No. 5), which was the journal of the Spartacist League Central Committee Commission for Work Among Women from 1973 until 1996.*

Contrary to an opinion still subscribed to in certain circles, modern feminism did not emerge full-grown from the fertile womb of the New Left, but is in fact an ideological offspring of the utopian egalitarianism of the early nineteenth century, which was in turn a product of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. It is noteworthy that the most original theorist of utopian socialism, Charles Fourier, was also the first advocate of women's liberation through the replacement of the nuclear family by collective child rearing. Since utopian socialism (including its solution to the problem of the oppression of women) represented the ideals of the bourgeois-democratic revolution breaking through the barriers of private property, it was historically progressive. However, with the genesis of Marxism and the recognition that an egalitarian society can emerge only out of the rule of the working class, feminism (like other forms of utopian egalitarianism) lost its progressive aspect and became an ideology of the left wing of liberal individualism, a position which it continues to occupy to this day.

### Women in the Bourgeois-Democratic Vision

Without question, the most important bourgeois-democratic work on women's liberation was Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* written in 1792. Wollstonecraft was part of a circle of English radical democrats which included William Blake, Tom Paine and William Godwin, whose political lives came to be dominated by the French Revolution. A year before she wrote her classic on sexual equality, Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Man*, a polemic against Edmund Burke's counterrevolutionary writings. A few years after, she was to attempt a history of the French Revolution.

While informed and imbued with moral outrage as a result of her own experiences as an unmarried, middle-class woman (she worked as a school teacher and governess), *Vindication* is essentially an extension of the principles of the Enlightenment and French Revolution to women. The first chapter, entitled "Rights and Duties of Mankind," sets the theoretical framework. *Vindication* rests heavily on analogies between the basis for the equality of women and general social equality.

For a contemporary reader, *Vindication* seems a highly unbalanced work. While the description of the role of women continues to be relevant, Wollstonecraft's solutions appear pallid. Her main programmatic demand, to which she devotes the concluding chapter, is uniform education for girls and boys. Even when she wrote *Vindication* this was only a moderately radical proposal. In fact in the very year that *Vindication* was written, a similar educational program was proposed in the French Assembly. Yet generations after the establishment of coeducation and the even more radical reform of women's suffrage, Wollstonecraft's depiction of women's role in society continues to ring true.

Although Wollstonecraft was one of the most radical political activists of her day (shortly after writing her classic on women's rights, she crossed the Channel to take part in the revolutionary French government), *Vindication* has an unexpectedly moralizing and personalist character. Like many feminists of our day, she appeals to men to recognize the full humanity of women and to women to stop being sex objects and develop themselves. And there is the same conviction that if only men and women would really believe in these ideals and behave accordingly, then women would achieve equality.

The emphasis on individual relationships is not peculiar to Wollstonecraft, but arises from the inherent contradiction within the bourgeois-democratic approach to women's oppression. Wollstonecraft accepted the nuclear family as the central institution of society and argued for sexual equality within that framework.

By accepting the basic role of women as mothers, Wollstonecraft accepted a division of labor in which women were necessarily economically dependent on their husbands. Therefore, women's equality was essentially dependent on how the marriage partners treated one another. In good part, *Vindication* is an argument that parents and particularly fathers should raise their daughters more like their sons in order to bring out their true potential. But if fathers reject education for their daughters, there is no other recourse. Here we have the limits both of bourgeois democracy and of Wollstonecraft's vision.

### Charles Fourier and the Abolition of the Family

The status of women in the nineteenth century represented the most acute and manifest expression of the contradiction between capitalist society and its own ideals. It was this contradiction that gave birth to utopian socialism. Early in the nineteenth century it became apparent to those still committed to the ideals of the French Revolution that liberty, equality and fraternity were not compatible with private property in a competitive market economy. As the most incisive of the pioneer socialists, Charles Fourier, put it:

> "Philosophy was right to vaunt *liberty*; it is the foremost desire of all creatures. But philosophy forgot that in civilized society liberty is illusory if the common people lack wealth. When the wage-earning classes are poor, their independence is as fragile as a house without foundations. The free man who lacks wealth immediately sinks back under the yoke of the rich."
>
> —Beecher and Bienvenu (Eds.), *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier*

And when Fourier applied the same critical concepts to the status of women, he reached equally radical, anti-bourgeois conclusions. The importance that Fourier attributed to the condition of women is well known:

> "Social progress and changes of period are brought about by virtue of the progress of women toward liberty, and social retrogression occurs as a result of a diminution in the liberty of women.... In summary, the extension of the privileges of women is the fundamental cause of all social progress."
>
> —*Ibid.*

What is of decisive importance about Fourier's concern for women's oppression is that he put forth a program for the total reconstruction of society that would end the historic division of labor between men and women. In Fourier's projected socialist community, children were raised collectively with no particular relation to their biological parents, men and women performed the same work and total sexual liberty was encouraged. (He regarded heterosexual monogamy as the extension of bourgeois property concepts to the sexual sphere.)

Fourier's intense hostility to the patriarchal family in good part derived from his realization that it was inherently sexually repressive. In this he anticipated much of radical Freudianism. For example, he observed, "There are still many parents who allow their unmarried daughters to suffer and die for want of sexual satisfaction" (*Ibid.*).

Despite the fantastic nature of his projected socialist communities or "phalanxes," Fourier's program contained the rational core for the reorganization of society needed to liberate women. He was uniquely responsible for making the demand for the liberation of women through the abolition of the nuclear family an integral part of the socialist program which the young Marx and Engels inherited. Engels was more than willing (for example, in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*)

*continued on page 8*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# How I Broke with Feminism and Became a Revolutionary Marxist

## By Simone Hayes

## For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

When I first came around the Spartacist League, I was shocked when members declared that they were definitively *not* feminists. I was a feminist and everyone I knew was a feminist. I subscribed to the pick-your-own version of feminism. Whatever you wanted feminism to mean, that was fine with me.

I recall being asked a very simple question by a Spartacist League member. She asked me where women's oppression came from and I responded, matter of factly, that "patriarchy" oppressed women. I believed the divisions in society were based on gender, as all feminists do. In other words, women were oppressed because for centuries people believed them to be inferior and society and its laws merely reflected that belief.

When I was a sophomore in college, I became a feminist. A lot of the activities I participated in as a feminist centered on campus agitation. I joined a group in community college called the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, which was basically a campus section of the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF). The FMF was a nonprofit organization that had split with the National Organization for Women in the 1980s. Its main objective was to "raise consciousness" among students about women's rights, within the framework of capitalism. We had petition drives, panel discussions and demonstrations on issues surrounding reproductive rights and issues affecting women internationally.

When I transferred to UCLA my junior year, antiwar "social justice" organizations, i.e., class-collaborationist coalition groups, abounded and I threw myself into this cozy little "family of the left" with great enthusiasm. It did not bother me that we emphasized (maybe 15 to 20 times a day) during the 2006 midterm elections that women desperately needed Democrats in office to get rid of harmful legislation. Or that I had to write press releases for the FMF calling on the U.S. and UN to intervene in Afghanistan and Iran to "protect" Middle Eastern women.

My basic outlook as a feminist was that most worldly ills could be solved if everyone just realized that women were equal to men. Feminists have a fundamental misunderstanding of the breakdown of society and its antagonisms as they believe the fundamental division in the world is between women and men. Feminist theorists have cooked up all sorts of theories on how to rectify and overcome these divisions. The principle most commonly promulgated by feminists is the need for women's representation among the bourgeoisie and in bourgeois politics. I myself believed that if women were represented in government and Fortune 500 companies in a more egalitarian manner, this would plant the seed of women's equality and the world would gradually become a more equal place. These were thoroughly idealist views that were eventually stamped out after I studied a historical analysis of women's oppression.

"Feminism vs. Marxism: Origins of the Conflict" came with my first subscription to *Workers Vanguard* and was the first Spartacist article I believe I ever read. This article made clear the origins of feminism from "utopian egalitarianism" in the early 19th century and its eventual degeneration into the liberal individualist milieu.

As I was studying Marxism, I read a lot of articles on the deficiency of feminism, on its very bourgeois roots and its very flawed program for women's emancipation. But what truly broke me from a feminist, and therefore, idealist viewpoint, was studying historical materialism and looking at the world from a class perspective. With this perspective, the roots of women's oppression became clear. One particular work that was essential to my understanding of women's oppression was Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Engels presents and explains the core institution of women's oppression, the monogamous family unit, and how this institution arose with the inception of private property.

The institution of the family under capitalism is essential to the maintenance of capitalism and it is also the main source of women's oppression. Women bear the burden of raising the next generation of laborers, instilling bourgeois morality and obedience and caring for the people capitalism will not care for: the young, the sick and the old. Black women workers are triply oppressed, as they are not only wage slaves but are also subject to sexual and racial oppression.

The material conditions necessary to liberate women became clear. It was imperative to overthrow capitalism and therefore private property and establish a socialized planned economy. With a planned economy everything that is materially necessary to truly emancipate women would be provided, such as socialized kitchens, laundries, day care, not to mention free health care and free abortion on demand. Studying the Russian Revolution made this clear to me. The Bolsheviks fought, as soon as the Soviet government was formed, to replace the family with the socialization of household labor. Communal dining halls, laundries and childcare facilities were established and laws giving women the right to vote and to abortions were passed. When I first studied the Russian Revolution, I continually, and perhaps skeptically, questioned why the emancipation of women was an essential task of the Bolsheviks after the revolution. I say skeptically, because as a feminist, I thought that women played more of a background role in the revolution and the question of their liberation was never a crucial one. Reading letters from Lenin and other Bolsheviks at this time (from *The Emancipation of Women*) quashed my skepticism. Because to the Bolsheviks, women's emancipation was integral to the emancipation of labor itself, not subordinate to it.

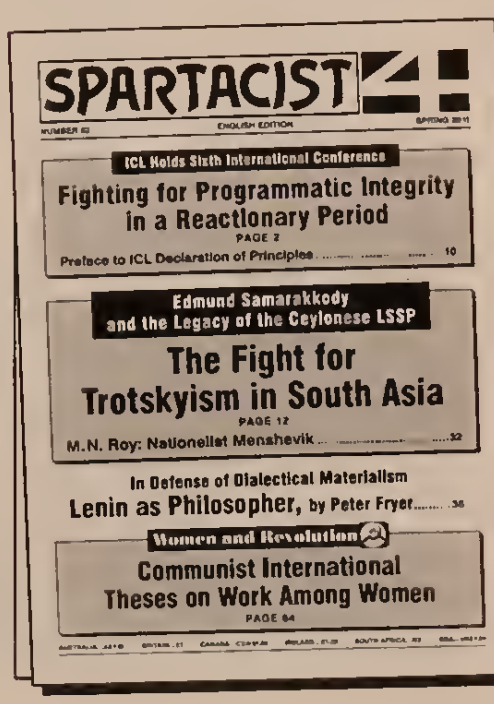
Many feminists who have studied the Russian Revolution claim that the Bolsheviks subordinated the question of women's emancipation to the question of proletarian liberation and the struggle for power. This shows a clear misunderstanding of what is necessary for women to be liberated. In other situations where the question of women's emancipation was essential, feminists have been on the wrong side. Example: Afghanistan 1979. When the Soviet Union entered Afghanistan in 1979, most feminists took the side of the woman-hating CIA-backed *mujahedin* against the Soviet Union, while the *mujahedin* threw acid in the faces of women who were attempting to educate themselves.

After a lot of reading (and many arguments) I came to the realization that feminism can take you to some pretty nasty places politically. From many feminists' hysterical call, like Take Back the Night, for more cops on college campuses, thereby targeting minority youth, to feminists cozying up to the religious right in anti-sex witchhunts against pornography. Internationally, feminist ideology hurts women by continuously calling for U.S. imperialism and the UN to "intervene" in places like Afghanistan and Iran. Here in the U.S, it is no secret that feminists make it their duty to get Democrats elected. If you go to the Feminist Majority Foundation's Feminists for Obama Web site, you will see in big bold letters, "We won! We won!" and below it, a huge picture of Obama with the caption: "This is what a feminist looks like." This clearly demonstrates the political bankruptcy of feminism. Feminists claim that "we have won." Who is this "we"? It is certainly not the workers, black people or the oppressed of this country. And it's not just Obama they champion; feminists ask women workers to solidarize with Hillary Clinton, Deputy Top Cop of U.S. imperialism, rather than the man next to them on the factory line! Feminists do not want to get rid of the capitalist state; in fact, they seek to work inside it. Therefore, they have no genuine perspective toward women's emancipation.

As a Marxist, I now champion the fight for all the workers and oppressed in the world to throw off the yoke of this racist capitalist system. As a Spartacus Youth Club member, I join the fight to win students over to the understanding that the workers must take power in their own name and dismantle this racist capitalist system. As I studied the SL's history and the history of working-class struggle, I came to the understanding that one cannot fight just for the liberation of *women*. One must take up the fight for the liberation of all workers and oppressed. How is this possible? By building a Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in the struggle to smash capitalism through world socialist revolution!■

Getty

**Hillary Clinton flanked by NOW president Kim Gandy (right) and FMF founder Eleanor Smeal (left) at "Hillary for president" rally in 2007.**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# Feminism vs. Marxism...

*(continued from page 6)*

to pay homage to the primary author of the socialist program for women's liberation.

### Utopian Egalitarianism and Women's Liberation

While not giving the woman question the centrality it had in Fourierism, the two other major currents of early nineteenth-century socialism, Owenism and Saint-Simonism, were also unambiguously committed to sexual equality and opposed to legally enforced monogamy. The political life of the early nineteenth century was characterized by the *complete interpenetration* of the struggle for women's liberation and the general struggle for an egalitarian society. Those women advocating women's rights (no less than the men who did so) did not view this question as distinct from, much less counterposed to, the general movement for a rational social order. Those women who championed sexual equality were either socialists or radical democrats whose activity on behalf of women's rights occupied only a fraction of their political lives. The most radical women advocates of sexual equality—the Americans Frances Wright and Margaret Fuller and the Frenchwoman Flora Tristan—all conform to this political profile.

Frances Wright began her political career as a liberal reformer with a tract in favor of the abolition of slavery. She was won to socialism by Robert Dale Owen, Robert Owen's son, who immigrated to the U.S. to become its most important radical socialist in the 1820-30's. Wright established an Owenite commune in Tennessee modeled on the famous one at New Harmony, Indiana. In 1828-29, she and Robert Dale Owen edited the *Free Enquirer*, a newspaper associated with the New York Workingman's Party which championed universal suffrage, free public education, "free love" and birth control.

Margaret Fuller, whose *Women in the Nineteenth Century* was the most influential women's rights work of her generation, was a product of New England Transcendentalism and had edited a journal with Ralph Waldo Emerson. Like Wollstonecraft, Margaret Fuller approached the woman question from the standpoint of religious radicalism (the equality of souls).

Fuller was associated with the Transcendentalist commune, Brook Farm, about the time it was transformed into a Fourierist community or "phalanx," the year before she wrote her classic on women's equality. Shortly after that she went to Europe and became involved in the democratic nationalist movements that were a mainspring in the revolutions of 1848. In that momentous year, she went to Italy to run a hospital for Guiseppe Mazzini's Young Italy movement.

The most important woman socialist of the pre-1848 era was Flora Tristan. She began her revolutionary career with a tract in favor of legalized divorce, which had been outlawed in France following the reaction of 1815. (As a young woman Tristan had left her husband, an act which resulted in social ostracism and continual hardship throughout her life.) Her work on divorce led to a correspondence with the aging Fourier and a commitment to socialism. Among the most cosmopolitan of socialists, Tristan had crisscrossed the Channel playing an active role in both the Owenite and Chartist movements. Summing up her political situation in a letter to Victor Considerant, leader of the Fourierist movement after the master's death, she wrote: "Almost the entire world is against me, men because I am demanding the emancipation of women, the propertied classes because I am demanding the emancipation of the wage earners" (Goldsmith, *Seven Women Against the World*).

Mansell Collection; John Opie (top right)

**Top right: English radical democrat Mary Wollstonecraft. Her 1792 classic work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, was extension of the principles of the Enlightenment and 1789 French Revolution. Left: Storming of the Bastille in Paris, July 1789, inspired fighters against tyranny around the world.**

In the 1840's the ancient French craft unions, the *compagnons*, were transforming themselves into modern trade unions. This process produced an embryonic revolutionary socialist labor movement whose main leaders were Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Auguste Blanqui and Etienne Cabet. Flora Tristan was part of this nascent proletarian socialist movement. Her *The Workers Union*, written in 1843, was the most advanced statement of proletarian socialism up to its day. Its central theme was the need for an *international* workers' organization. (Marx met Tristan while he was in Paris and was undoubtedly influenced by her work.) The concluding passage of *The Workers Union* affirms: "Union is power if we unite on the social and political field, on the ground of equal rights for both sexes, if we organize labor, we shall win welfare for all."

*The Workers Union* devotes a section to the problems of women and its concluding passage indicates the integral role that sexual equality had in Tristan's concept of socialism: "We have resolved to include in our Charter woman's sacred and inalienable rights. We desire that men should give to their wives and mothers the liberty and absolute equality which they enjoy themselves."

Flora Tristan died of typhoid in 1844 at the age of 41. Had she survived the catastrophe of 1848 and remained politically active, the history of European socialism might well have been different, for she was frec of the residual Jacobinism of Blanqui and the artisan philistinism of Proudhon.

Contemporary feminists and bourgeois historians tend to label all early nineteenth-century female advocates of sexual equality feminists. This is a wholly illegitimate analysis—a projection of current categories back into a time when they are meaningless. As a delimited movement and distinctive ideology feminism did not exist in the early nineteenth century. Virtually *all* the advocates of full sexual equality considered this an integral part of the movement for a generally free and egalitarian society rooted in Enlightenment principles and carrying forward the American and particularly the French Revolutions. The American Owenite Frances Wright was no more a feminist than the English Owenite William Thompson, who wrote *An appeal of one half the Human Race, Women, against the pretentions of the other Half, Men, to keep them in Civil and Domestic Slavery*. Flora Tristan was no more a feminist than was Fourier.

Roger-Viollet

**Flora Tristan**

In the 1840's, a Transcendentalist radical like Margaret Fuller, a nationalist democrat like Guiseppe Mazzini and a socialist working-class organizer like Etienne Cabet could consider themselves part of a common political movement whose program was encapsulated in the slogan, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." In its most radical expression, this movement looked forward to a single, total revolution which would simultaneously establish democracy, eliminate classes, achieve equality for women and end national oppression.

This vision was defeated on the barricades in 1848. And with that defeat, the component elements of early nineteenth-century radicalism (liberal democracy and socialism, trade unionism, women's equality and national liberation) separated and began to compete and conflict with one another. After 1848, it seemed that bourgeois society would continue for some time and that the interests of the oppressed, be they workers, women or nations, would have to be realized within its framework. Feminism (like trade unionism and national liberation) emerged as a delimited movement with its own constituency, ideology and organization only after the great catastrophe of 1848 had temporarily dispelled the vision of a fundamentally new social order.

### Marx Against Utopian Egalitarianism

It is sometimes written that Fourier regarded socialism more as a means of overcoming women's oppression than class oppression. This is a post-Marx way of looking at politics and not how Fourier would have viewed it. He would have said that he projected a society which would satisfy human needs and that the most striking thing about it was the radical change in the role of women. As opposed to the materialist view that different political movements represent the interests of different classes, utopian socialism shared the rational idealistic conception of political motivation characteristic of the Enlightenment—i.e., that different political movements reflect different conceptions of the best possible social organization. The idealism of early socialism was probably inevitable since it was produced by those revolutionary bourgeois democrats who maintained their principles after the actual bourgeoisie had abandoned revolutionary democracy. The social base of early socialism was those petty-bourgeois radicals who had gone beyond the interests and real historic possibilities of their class. This was most true of German "True Socialism" which, in a nation with virtually no industrial workers and a conservative, traditionalist petty bourgeoisie, was purely a literary movement. It was least true of English Owenism, which had intersected the embryonic labor movement while retaining a large element of liberal philanthropism.

By the 1840's a working-class movement had arisen in France, Belgium and England which was attracted to socialist ideas and organization. However, the relationship of the new-fledged socialist workers' organizations to the older socialist currents, as well as to liberal democracy and the political expressions of women's rights and national liberation, remained confused in all existing socialist theories. It was Marx who cut the Gordian knot and provided a coherent, realistic analysis of the social basis for the socialist movement within bourgeois society.

Marx asserted that the working class was the social group which would play the primary and distinctive role in establishing socialism. This was so because the working class was that social group whose interests and condition were most in harmony with a collectivist economy or, conversely, which had the least stake in the capitalist mode of production.

Marx's appreciation of the role of the proletariat was not deduced from German philosophy, but was the result of his experience in France in the 1840's. Socialism had manifestly polarized French society along class lines, the main base for socialism being the industrial working class, the propertied classes being implacably hostile and the petty hourgeoisie vacillating, often seeking a utopian third road.

For Marx the predominance of intellectuals in the early socialist movement was not proof that the socialist movement could be based on universal reason. Rather it was necessarily a phenomenon partly reflecting the contradictions of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and partly anticipating the new alignment of class forces: "A portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat and in particular, a portion of bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole" (Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*).

The propertied, educated classes could not be won to socialism on the basis of rational and democratic ideals even though objectively those ideals could only be realized under socialism. Along the same lines, women of the privileged class and the ruling stratum of oppressed nation-

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alities cannot in general be won to socialism even though objectively sexual equality and national liberation can only be realized under socialism.

Closely related to the question of the class basis of the socialist movement is the question of the material conditions under which socialism can be established. Reflecting on pre-Marxist socialism in his later years, Engels quipped that the utopians believed that the reason socialism hadn't been established before was that nobody had ever thought of it. That Engels' witticism was only a slight exaggeration is shown by the importance of communal experiments in the early socialist movement, indicating a belief that socialism could be established under any and all conditions if a group really wanted it. The primacy of voluntarism for the early socialists again reflected the fact that their thinking was rooted in eighteenth-century, individualistic idealism which, in turn, derived from Protestantism, an earlier bourgeois ideology.

In sharp and deliberate contrast to the utopians, Marx asserted that inequality and oppression were necessary consequences of economic scarcity and attempts to eliminate them through communal escapism or political coercion were bound to fail:

> "...this development of productive forces (which itself implies the actual empirical existence of men in their ***world-historic***, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it ***want*** is merely made general, and with ***destitution*** the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced...." [emphasis in original]
>
> —Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

Marx's assertion that inequality and oppression are historically necessary and can be overcome only through the *total* development of society, centering on the raising of the productive forces, represents his most fundamental break with *progressive* bourgeois ideology. Therefore, to this day, these concepts are the most unpalatable aspects of Marxism for those attracted to socialism from a liberal humanist outlook:

> "...although at first the development of the capacities of the human species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes, in the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides with the development of the individual; the higher level of individuality is thus only achieved by a historical process in which individuals are sacrificed...."
>
> —Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*

> "...it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means,...slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and...in general people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. 'Liberation' is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse...."
>
> —Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*

Dietz Verlag Berlin

**Revolutions erupted across Europe in 1848. Workers defend barricades in Frankfurt, Germany.**

It is evident that "women" can replace "individuals" and "classes" in these passages without doing damage to their meaning, since Marx regarded women's oppression as a *necessary* aspect of that stage in human development associated with class society.

Marx's programmatic differences with the utopians were encapsulated in the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" which he regarded as one of his few original, important contributions to socialist theory. The dictatorship of the proletariat is that period after the overthrow of the capitalist state when the working class administers society in order to create the economic and cultural conditions for socialism.

During the dictatorship of the proletariat, the restoration of capitalism remains a possibility. This is not primarily due to the machinations of die-hard reactionaries but arises rather out of the conflicts and tensions generated by the continuation of global economic scarcity.

This economic scarcity is caused not only by inadequate physical means of production. Even more importantly it derives from the inadequate and extremely uneven cultural level inherited from capitalism. Socialist superabundance presupposes an enormous raising of the cultural level of mankind. The "average" person under socialism would have the knowledge and capacity of several learned professions in contemporary society.

However, in the period immediately following the revolution, the administration of production will necessarily be largely limited to that elite trained in bourgeois society, since training their replacements will take time. Therefore, skilled specialists such as the director of an airport, chief of surgery in a hospital or head of a nuclear power station will have to be drawn from the educated, privileged classes of the old capitalist society. Although in a qualitatively diminished way, the dictatorship of the proletariat will continue to exhibit economic inequality, a hierarchic division of labor and those aspects of social oppression rooted in the cultural level inherited from bourgeois society (e.g., racist ***attitudes*** will not disappear the day after the revolution).

Library of Congress

**"New England Factory Life" by Winslow Homer, 1868.**

These general principles concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat likewise apply to the woman question. To the extent that it rests on the cultural level inherited from capitalism, certain aspects of sexual inequality and oppression will continue well into the dictatorship of the proletariat. The population cannot be totally re-educated nor can a psychological pattern instilled in men and women from infancy be fully eliminated or reversed.

The rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary transition period to socialism is the central justification for utopian egalitarianism (including radical or "socialist" feminism) in the era of Marxism.

## The Battle over Protective Labor Legislation

Feminism was one of the three major extensions of utopian egalitarianism into the post-1848 era, the other two being anarchism and artisan cooperativism (Proudhonism). In fact, during the later nineteenth century radical feminism and anarchism heavily interpenetrated one another both as regards their position on the woman question and in personnel. The decisive element in common among feminism, anarchism and cooperativism was a commitment to a level of social equality and individual freedom impossible to attain not only under capitalism, but in the period following its overthrow. At a general ideological level, feminism was bourgeois individualism in conflict with the realities and limits of bourgeois society.

During their lifetimes, Marx and Engels had two notable conflicts with organized feminism—continual clashes in the context of the struggle for protective labor legislation and a short faction fight in the American section of the First International. While the question of protective labor legislation covered a great deal of ground at many levels of concreteness, the central difference hetween the Marxists and feminists over this issue was also the central difference between Marxism and utopian egalitarianism—i.e., the question of the primacy of the material well-being of the masses and the historical interests of the socialist movement vis-à-vis formal equality within bourgeois society.

The feminist opposition to protective labor legislation argued and continues to argue that it would mean legal inequality in the status of women and that it was partly motivated by paternalistic, male-chauvinist prejudices. Marx and Engels recognized these facts but maintained that the physical well-being of working women and the interests of the entire class in reducing the intensity of exploitation more than offset this formal and ideological inequality. Writing to Gertrud Guillaume-Schack, a German feminist who later became an anarchist, Engels stated his case:

> "That the working woman needs special protection against capitalist exploitation because of her special physiological functions seems obvious to me. The English women who championed the formal right of members of their sex to permit themselves to be as thoroughly exploited by the capitalists as the men are mostly, directly or indirectly, interested in the capitalist exploitation of both sexes. I admit I am more interested in the health of the future generation than in the absolute formal equality of the sexes in the last years of the capitalist mode of production. It is my conviction that real equality of women and men can come true only when exploitation of either by capital has been abolished and private housework has been transformed into a public industry."
>
> —Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Letter to Guillaume-Schack of 5 July 1885

Thus Engels recognized in feminism the false consciousness of the privileged classes of women who believe that since they themselves are oppressed only as women, sexual inequality is the only significant form of oppression.

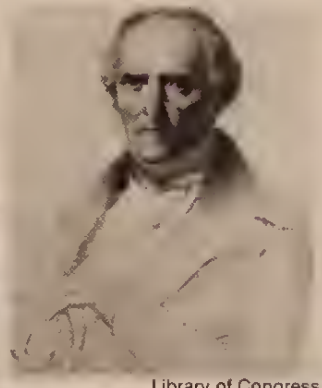
Guillaume-Schack's conversion to anarchism was not accidental, for the anarchists also opposed protective labor legislation for women as an inconsistent, inegalitarian reform. Writing a polemic against the Italian anarchists in the early 1870's, Marx ridiculed the "logic" that one "must not take the trouble to obtain legal prohibition of the employment of girls under 10 in factories because a stop is not thereby put to the exploitation of boys under 10"—that this was a "compromise which damages the purity of eternal principles" (quoted in Hal Draper, *International Socialism*, July-August 1970).

## Woodhull versus Sorge in the First International

Because of the catch-all nature of the First International, the Marxist tendency had to wage major internal factional struggles against the most characteristic left currents in the various countries (e.g., trade-union reformism in Britain, Proudhon's cooperativism in France, Lasalle's

*continued on page 10*

W. H. Brooke



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**Early 19th-century utopian socialists Robert Owen (left) and Charles Fourier (right). New Harmony socialist commune in Indiana as envisioned by Owen.**

F. Bate

# Construction...

*(continued from page 12)*

Engineers (IUOE), died in two separate crane accidents on the Upper East Side in 2008, when corners were cut on safety. Of all the workplace deaths that year, 21 percent were in construction. These grueling jobs often involve long hours under the sun or in dangerously cold, windy conditions, during which attention to detail is especially vital for safety.

In no small part because IUOE members can quickly bring any large project to a halt, the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is taking special aim at the union, angling to take away its control over crane operator licensing and to get rid of senior master mechanics, relief crane operators and oilers. REBNY president Steven Spinola snarled: "If it's nonproductive work, why are we paying for it?" In April, the corporation-supported Regional Plan Association presented a widely publicized study to City Hall proposing anti-labor "reforms" like beginning the eight-hour day once a worker reaches his station, which in NYC can be many floors up, rather than upon arrival at the job site. The study also attacked the union hiring hall for fostering "a worker's loyalty to his union ...rather than to any actual employer."

Building-trades workers don't have to eat it. Union hands shaped the city skyline, and the construction unions—one of the few remaining bastions of organized labor in private industry and a labor linchpin here—can still wield considerable power.

Jimenez/NY Times

**Construction worker removed by emergency personnel after collapse of trench in Brooklyn, June 2006.**

As the *New York Times* (18 March) put it, employers "are wary of pressing too hard, because a strike by just one union could be enough to shut down many of the city's major construction projects." These unions showed their potential power in 1998, when a rally against the hiring of non-union construction outfits by the Metropolitan Transit Authority and others effectively became a one-day citywide construction strike. In Chicago last year, a 19-day strike by thousands of laborers and operating engineers brought road repairs and other construction to a standstill, winning a 9.75 percent wage increase over three years.

The NYC bosses' offensive against the construction trades can only be turned back through hard class struggle, as is true for unions that are under attack across the country. This must include an aggressive drive to organize non-union workers, crucially including the growing immigrant layer in construction as well as black workers who historically have been all but excluded from many of the skilled trades. But standing in the way of such struggle are the hidebound bureaucrats atop the construction craft unions, who barely lift a finger to organize and go into contract negotiations with track records short on strikes and job-site shutdowns and long on accommodating the bosses and the capitalist Democratic Party.

### Stop the Givebacks!

With their narrow, job-trusting policies, the building-trades officials have long tied construction workers' interests to those of the developers and contractors who make their profits by exploiting labor. This certainly is the case with Gary LaBarbera, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York (BCTC), which represents 100,000 workers in 15 unions. In a *Daily News* (29 May) op-ed piece, LaBarbera trumpeted, "Rather than inflating costs, unions have been among the only players in the construction industry working hard to bring them down."

Shortly after assuming his current post in 2009, LaBarbera collaborated closely with Building Trades Employers' Association president Louis J. Coletti to negotiate new Project Labor Agreements (PLAs). These sweetheart deals with contractors and builders like Larry Silverstein, covering large private and public construction projects in the city, shredded work rules and outrageously included no-strike clauses to cut labor costs and supposedly save jobs. Sold in the name of "shared sacrifice," these pacts only whetted the appetites of the city's real estate magnates for more concessions from labor.

In late April, the leadership of District Council 9 (DC 9) painters union, whose contract was set to expire on April 30, gave even more ground. Among their massive concessions were abolishing the union's hiring hall and setting up a new cheap-labor tier of wages and benefits for workers building housing in NYC's outer boroughs. Painters and tapers on those jobs will get paid *one-third* of the rate for commercial jobs downtown. Rather than

## Young Spartacus

# Feminism vs. Marxism...

*(continued from page 9)*

state socialism in Germany and anarchism in Eastern and Southern Europe). It is therefore highly symptomatic that the major factional struggle within the American section centered around feminism, a variant of petty-bourgeois radicalism. In the most general sense, the importance of the Woodhull tendency reflected the greater political weight of the American liberal middle class relative to the proletariat than in European class alignments. Historically petty-bourgeois moralism has been more influential in American socialism than in virtually any other country. This was particularly pronounced in the period after the Civil War when abolitionism served as the model for native American radicalism.

The relative political backwardness of the American working class is rooted primarily in the process of its development through successive waves of immigration from different countries. This created such intense ethnic divisions that it impeded even elementary trade-union organization. In addition, many of the immigrant workers who came from peasant backgrounds were imbued with strong religious, racial and sexual prejudices and a generally low cultural level which impeded class—much less socialist—consciousness. In general the discontent of American workers was channeled by the petty bourgeoisie of the various ethnic groups into the struggle for their own place in the parliamentary-state apparatus.

The American working class's lack of strong organization, its ethnic electoral politics and relatively backward social attitudes created a political climate in which "enlightened middle-class socialism" was bound to flourish. Not least important in this respect was the fact that the liberal middle classes were Protestant while the industrial working class was heavily Roman Catholic. Indeed, an important aspect of the Woodhull/Sorge fight was over an orientation toward Irish Catholic workers.

Victoria Woodhull was the best-known (more accurately notorious) "free love"

Marxists Internet Archive

**Friedrich Sorge**

advocate of her day, ambitious and with a gift for political showmanship. Seeing that the First International was becoming fashionable, she organized her own section of it (Section 12) along with remnants of the New Democracy, a middle-class, electoral-reformist organization, led by Samuel Foot Andrews, a former abolitionist. The Woodhullites thus entered the First International as a radical liberal faction, with an emphasis on women's rights and an electoralist strategy.

Section 12 rapidly retranslated the principles of the First International into the language of American liberal democracy. Needless to say, it came out for total organizational federalism with each section free to pursue its own activities and line within the general principles of the International. Section 12's political line and organizational activities (its official paper, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, preached spiritualism among other things) quickly brought it into conflict within the Marxist tendency, led by the German veteran of the 1848 Revolution, Friedrich Sorge. Section 12 was able to cause much factional trouble, not only in the U.S. but abroad, because its radical liberalism fed into the growing anarchist, electoral-reformist and federalist currents in the International. The Woodhullites were part of a rotten bloc which coalesced against the Marxist leadership of the First International in 1871-72. Woodhull enjoyed a short stay in the anarchist International in 1873 on her way to becoming a wealthy eccentric.

The immediate issue of the faction fight was the priority of women's rights, notably suffrage, over labor issues particularly the eight-hour day. That for the Woodhullites what was involved was not a matter of programmatic emphasis, but a counterposition to proletarian socialism was made explicit after the split with Sorge: "The extension of equal citizenship to women, the world over, must *precede* any general change in the subsisting relation of capital and labor" [emphasis in original] (*Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, 18 November 1871).

After splitting with the Sorge wing, while still claiming loyalty to the First International, Section 12 organized the Equal Rights Party in order to run Woodhull for president in 1872. The program was straight left-liberalism without any proletarian thrust. It called for "...a truly republican government which shall not only recognize but guarantee equal political and social rights to men and women, and which shall secure equal opportunities of education for all children" (*Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, 20 April 1872).

The general political principles of the Woodhullites were clearly expressed in their appeal to the General Council of the First International against the Sorge wing:

> "It [the object of the International] involves, first, the Political Equality and Social Freedom of men and women alike.... Social Freedom means absolute *immunity* from the impertinent intrusion in all affairs of exclusively personal concernment, such as religious belief, *sexual relations*, *habits of dress*, etc." [emphasis in original]
>
> —*Documents of the First International*, The General Council: Minutes 1871-72

This appeal was answered by a resolution written by Marx, which suspended Section 12. After cataloguing the organizational abuses and rotten politics, Marx concluded by reasserting the central difference between democratic egalitarianism and proletarian socialism—namely, that the end to all forms of oppression must run through the victory of the working class over capitalism. Marx called attention to past International documents:

> "...relating to 'sectarian sections' or 'separatist bodies pretending to accomplish special missions' distinct from the common aim of the Association [First International], viz. to emancipate the mass of labour from its 'economical subjection to the monopolizer of the means of labour' which lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of social misery, mental degradation and political dependence."
>
> —*Ibid.*

While the Marxist case against the Woodhullites centered on their electoralism, middle-class orientation and quackery, the role of "free love" in the socialist movement had a definite significance in the fight. While including personal sexual freedom in their program, the Marxists insisted on a cautious approach to this question when dealing with more backward sections of the working class. By flaunting a sexually "liberated" life-style, the Woodhullites would have created a nearly impenetrable barrier to winning over conventional and religious workers. One of the main charges that Sorge brought against Section 12 at the Hague Conference in 1872 was that its activities had made it much more difficult for the International to reach the strategically placed Irish Catholic workers.

The historic relevance of the Woodhull/Sorge faction fight is that it demonstrated, in a rather pure way, the basis of feminism in classic bourgeois-democratic principles, particularly individualism. It further demonstrated that feminist currents tend to be absorbed into liberal reformism or anarchistic petty-bourgeois radicalism, both of which invariably unite against revolutionary proletarian socialism. ■


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fight to organize the non-union contractors, the DC 9 officials have enlisted in a race to the bottom, in what the BTEA hopes is a precedent for other unions.

In his service to big business, LaBarbera has gone the extra mile to undermine union rights, wages and benefits, and not just in his own bailiwick. Backing Democrat Andrew Cuomo in last year's guhernatorial race, LaBarbera joined business and real estate tycoons in the "Committee to Save New York," a capitalist cabal that has bankrolled Cuomo's war against the public workers unions. He intoned that "without a fiscally sound environment, we will not be able to attract new business" to New York City, adding that "at times there will be competing interests between public- and private-sector unions" (*New York Times*, 9 December 2010). LaBarbera was not only going after AFSCME and other public employees unions but also the municipal divisions of the IBEW electrical workers, Carpenters and other skilled trades unions that are under his own leadership! The wages and benefits of these unions are effectively set by those prevailing in the private sector.

As we wrote in "All Labor Must Fight Assault on Public Workers Unions!" (*WV* No. 975, 4 March): "In the face of a growing army of unemployed, the gutting of pensions, the lack of health care and the elimination of other social programs and benefits, the answer of the trade-union hureaucrats is to pit worker against worker in the struggle to survive." Now it is LaBarbera's own unions that are on the chopping block. If the construction unions cede their stronghold in New York City, it would expose the flanks of the remaining bastions of union power—city workers, transit workers, teachers, hospital workers, building service workers—many of whom are themselves moving into contract negotiations.

This underscores the need to break with the class-collaborationist program of the labor officialdom, which has time and again shown its capacity to "sacrifice" labor's interests for the bosses' bottom line. What is necessary is joint struggle by the many unions making up the construction trades, whose power lies in their ability to stop building projects through strike action. This points to the need for one industrial union of all construction workers, with an industry-wide hiring hall system and union control of training.

### Job Safety and Union Organization

For construction workers, and for the working class as a whole, defense of their unions is a matter of life and death. Speedup and callous disregard for workers' safety are intrinsic to capitalist production. Where there is no union, there is no organized force to resist the relentless drive of the bosses to increase profits at the expense of workers' safety. A recent study on coal mining by a Stanford Law School professor established what miners already know: that non-union mines are deathtraps compared to unionized mines ("Study Finds Fewer Fatalities, Injuries at Union Mines," *Charleston Daily Mail*, 26 May). Job-site safety must be actively overseen and enforced by the unions, which should immediately shut down unsafe sites. But as the recent uptick in NYC union construction site fatalities shows, where the union leadership sees its relationship to the bosses as a "partnership," safety is eroded and more workers get hurt or die.

WV Photo

**Members of public employees unions at NYC May Day demonstration.**

With the union tops substituting inflatable rats for picket lines and giving away the store at the bargaining table, the construction trades have lost a lot of ground to non-union operations, leaving unorganized workers at the bosses' mercy. Many of these workers are immigrant day laborers who are brutally exploited, cheated out of wages and subjected to murderously unsafe working conditions. New York's *El Diario* is full of reports on workplace accidents at job sites lacking safety equipment.

Unless there is an energetic campaign to organize the unorganized, the construction trade unions will continue to wither, and their members will continue to see their conditions deteriorate. The unions in this and other industries must recruit immigrant workers with full rights and benefits. This requires defending undocumented workers against immigration raids and roundups, undercutting the anti-union maneuvers of the capitalists and their government. ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!***

Any such struggle means fighting against the "America first" chauvinism of the bureaucratic misleaders of the construction trades and of the labor movement as a whole. Following the 2001 attack that destroyed the World Trade Center, the construction union tops latched on to the government's "war on terror" with special zeal. In 2003, they organized a thousands-strong rally in support of the imperialist war against Iraq, and last year they joined in the reactionary demonstrations against the so-called "Ground Zero Mosque." Thus they promote the lie of a "national interest" binding the workers to the American capitalist rulers, who had no qualms about throwing workers on the scrap heap when the current economic crisis hit. For nearly a decade, the government refused to shell out money for health care for construction workers who volunteered to clean up the World Trade Center site. A strike by construction workers on the massive rebuilding project on this site would be a good start in fighting against the capitalists' anti-union barrage.

### Against Racist Divide-and-Rule!

There must also be a struggle inside the unions to break with the racist job-trusting that long kept the skilled trades virtually impenetrable for blacks. The union bureaucrats' hostility to opening up union jobs to minorities made the unions vulnerable to government-backed schemes to gut union gains in the name of fighting discrimination. In 1970, the Nixon administration implemented the "Philadelphia Plan," which, disguised as an effort to promote racial equality, tore up union control of hiring by setting quotas for minorities in construction.

We opposed the Philadelphia Plan, which, like all intervention by the capitalist government into the unions, was designed to weaken the labor movement. At the same time, we called for the unions to undertake special hiring and training programs to recruit blacks, women and others previously shut out of the trades. As Marxists, we fight for the independence of the labor movement from all capitalist political parties and state agencies. We oppose government meddling in the internal affairs of the unions on principle, including the many "corruption" investigations into unions like the NYC Carpenters, which is now run by government-imposed trustees. Likewise, we oppose the motion recently filed in federal court by oppositional "reformers" in the Carpenters union to freeze contract negotiations between the union and several employer associations until after union elections. Labor must clean its own house!

Today black workers in construction are concentrated in less-skilled jobs. This is palpable at labor rallies, where Laborers contingents are heavily black and immigrant while craft contingents are largely white. Black workers remain a militant backbone of organized labor and are critical to linking the power of the working class to the anger of the ghettos, where young men and women have only the barest hope of finding any kind of jobs and are subject to a daily regimen of racist police abuse and terror.

With the ongoing capitalist economic crisis threatening ever more workers with losing their jobs, benefits and homes, there must be a fight for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread around the available work. The unions should demand a massive program of public works to rebuild the decaying infrastructure of New York and the rest of the country—the streets, the sewers, the bridges, the subway, schools and hospitals. This could help unite private- and public-sector unions together with the unemployed in a common struggle for jobs and quality public services.

It will not be easy to defeat the arrogant rulers' drive against the unions. Tens of thousands of trade unionists and others turned out repeatedly in Madison, Wisconsin, earlier this year in defense of the state's public employees unions which faced all-out assault by a Republican state government. But their desire to fight was diverted by the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy into a pathetic campaign to oust the Republican governor and legislators in favor of Democrats, who, from the White House to statehouses from New York to California, have led the drive to cripple the unions.

It will require the strength and solidarity of the working class to prevail against the capitalists' attacks. For that, a new, class-struggle leadership of labor must be forged. This is an essential part of the fight to build a multiracial workers party whose purpose is not only to defend the working class against the menace of its own devastation but to seize the forces of production from the profit-bloated capitalist class through socialist revolution. Under a workers government, the productive capacity squandered by the capitalists will be massively developed as part of a planned economy to rebuild society and satisfy the needs of all. ■

# Montes...

*(continued from page 12)*

terror" over the last decade, the capitalist government has slashed fundamental rights of association and speech. In June 2010, the Supreme Court expanded the definition of what legally can be considered "material support to terrorism" to include a wide range of activities deemed as somehow aiding proscribed foreign organizations, from giving money to Muslim charities to publishing interviews with leftist guerrilla fighters. Three months later, the Feds launched their attack against the Midwestern leftists and labor activists.

During the 2008 elections, liberals and reformist leftists, including the FRSO, pushed the dangerous myth that the election of Obama would reverse the worst policies of George W. Bush. But as the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Obama has amply shown that his promises to clean up the "excesses" of the Bush administration were nothing other than a statement to wage the "war on terror" more effectively. With the FBI raids against leftists, the Obama White House has trumped the Bush regime's assault on civil liberties.

The purpose of the "anti-terror" witchhunt is to terrorize the population, which in turn is supposed to accept the expansion of police powers at home while supporting predatory wars abroad. The ultimate target of the capitalist state's repressive measures is the multiracial working class, which alone has the social power and interest in smashing capitalist rule and replacing it with a workers state.

It is in the vital interests of the labor movement to defend Carlos Montes and all those caught up in the "anti-terror" witchhunts. The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL, demand that the charges against Montes and the Midwestern activists be dropped, that the subpoenas be withdrawn, and that all seized materials be returned to them. A protest is being called for Carlos Montes' first court appearance on June 16. It will take place outside the Alhambra Court House, located at 150 West Commonwealth Avenue, at 7:30 a.m. Down with the imperialists' "war on terror"! An injury to one is an injury to all! ■


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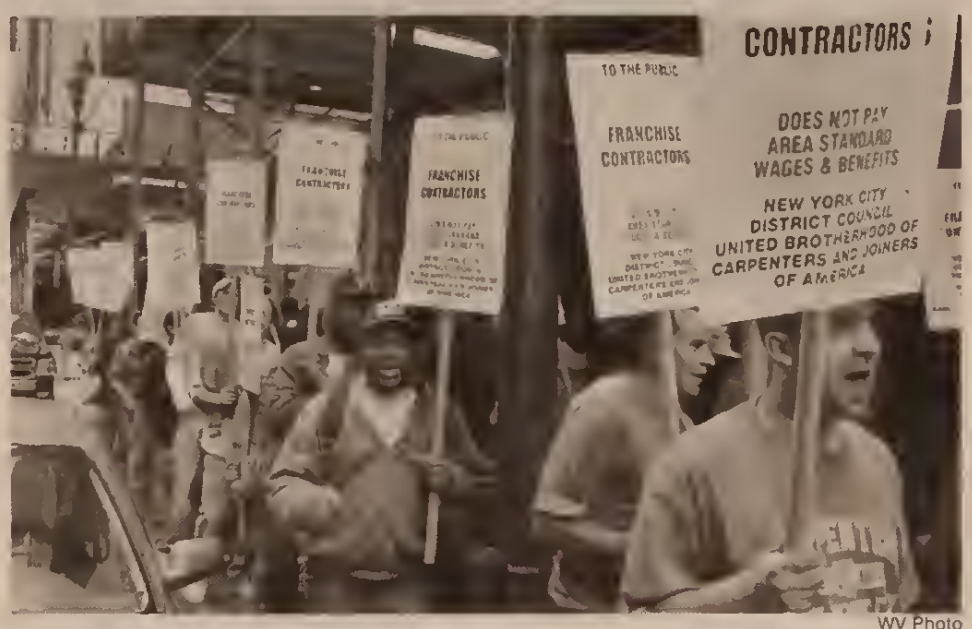
WORKERS VANGUARD

## Labor Tops Push "Partnership" with Bosses

# Capitalists Gun for NYC Construction Unions

NEW YORK CITY—With contracts for more than two dozen unions representing 60,000 construction workers expiring by June 30, the building owners, developers and contractors smell blood. When the nation's real estate market tanked and the economy went south three years ago, large-scale construction in the city was hit hard. The total number of construction jobs has dropped to its lowest level in 13 years, even as Donald Trump, Richard LeFrak, Stephen Ross and other major developers keep right on stacking their billions. Over the years, an increasing number of construction projects have gone to non-union labor, which constitutes at least one-quarter of the workforce in a city where just about every hard hat once possessed a union card. Now stalled projects are beginning to reopen, and the Manhattan real estate barons are planning the biggest decade of office construction since the 1980s.



WV Photo

Engineering News-Record

**Left: Carpenters protest non-union contractor in Midtown Manhattan, May 18. Right: Building Trades Employers' Association president Louis J. Coletti (at left) on "common ground" with Gary LaBarbera, president of Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.**

Like General Motors, which is making record profits after the White House helped wrest massive concessions from the United Auto Workers, the players in the NYC real estate industry spot a golden opportunity to go after union construction workers, historically some of the highest paid workers in the country. The capitalists have sought for decades to chip away at their status. In 1951, the Supreme Court banned "common situs" picketing of an entire construction site even when the dispute is with a single contractor, paving the way for incursions by non-union builders. The Building Trades Employers' Association (BTEA) bosses want changes to work rules that would undercut safety standards. They also want to take back hard-won union controls of job site conditions, slash overtime rates and hollow out health care and other union benefits. In a subway ad and Internet campaign earlier this year, the BTEA attempted to sell union members on major givebacks in the name of saving union jobs. Last week, the builders upped the ante, threatening to end their participation in the "New York Plan"—a more than century-old pact that commits them to using only union labor on major projects.

### Organize the Unorganized! For Union Control of Safety!

Workers' lives, not just their livelihoods, are at stake. In 2009, nearly one-third of those fatally injured on the job in New York City were Latino and 8 percent were Asian, two groups heavily represented in non-union residential construction outside Manhattan. Many safety precautions have already been sacrificed by the union tops, endangering workers and the public. Nine people, including at least four members of the International Union of Operating

*continued on page 10*

## FBI Raids Hit LA

# Defend Chicano Activist Carlos Montes!

Broadening the government's witchhunt of leftist activists, a Los Angeles Sheriff's SWAT team and the FBI invaded the Alhambra home of Carlos Montes, a veteran Chicano activist, in the pre-dawn hours of May 17, breaking down the door and tearing his house apart. Using reactionary gun control laws, the agents arrested Montes on a pretext of violating a firearms code. What is clear is that he was targeted for his 44-year history of leftist political activism. A founder of the Chicano Moratorium Movement Against the Vietnam War and cofounder of the Brown Berets, Montes is a supporter of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) and writes for its newspaper, *Fight Back!* He is also a leader of the Southern California Immigration Coalition.

Gloria Angelina Castillo/EGP

**Carlos Montes (center) at protest against the FBI's targeting of leftist activists.**

Montes had recently worked with the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, which was formed to defend 23 Midwestern leftists, antiwar organizers and union activists targeted by the FBI since September 2010 for the "crime" of solidarity with the oppressed in Latin America and the Near East (see *WV* No. 966, 8 October 2010). Many of the activists had helped to organize protests against the 2008 Republican National Convention. These included Montes, who was named in the subpoena at the time of the September FBI raid. Others were active in the Twin Cities Anti-War Committee, the Palestine Solidarity Group, the Colombia Action Network, Students for a Democratic Society and FRSO. Courageously, the 23 activists have refused to testify before the Chicago grand jury.

Released on bail, Montes described the raid to *EGP News* (27 May). He stated that the FBI and SWAT squad "tore down the door and ransacked my house, took my computer, took my computer files, took my cell phone. They looked at my family albums from the movement, from the Chicano Moratorium, the Community Service Organization, May 1st Southern California Immigration Coalition. It's political persecution." The FBI tried to question Montes about the FRSO as he was being taken to jail. The *Los Angeles Times* and other bourgeois news sources have blacked out coverage of Montes' frame-up arrest.

In vastly expanding the state's repressive powers in the name of the "war on

*continued on page 11*

WORKERS VANGUARD 50¢

No. 983 8 July 2011

# Greece: Mass Anger Over Savage Austerity

## European Crisis and the Bankruptcy of Capitalism

On June 29, as a two-day general strike virtually shut down the country and tens of thousands protested outside, the Greek parliament approved a new round of brutal austerity measures demanded by the Greek bourgeoisie and its imperialist overlords. The demonstrators—who included, in addition to workers, a broad range of the population from students and other youth to professionals and retirees—were viciously attacked by club-wielding riot police. More than a year of unrelenting attacks on the living standards of the Greek population has resulted in seething unrest across broad layers of society. In the last year alone, there have been at least a dozen one-day general strikes and massive protests. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost, homelessness has skyrocketed and many people, especially pensioners, are reliant on soup kitchens for their survival.

Video footage of the wanton violence meted out by the cops has provoked widespread indignation, as has another video documenting collusion between the police and hooded provocateurs who infiltrated the protesters. Police fired endless volleys of tear gas and stun grenades and pummeled protesters with chunks of masonry. At least 38 were reportedly arrested in what was blatantly a cop riot. *We demand that all charges be dropped against the anarchists and other anti-austerity protesters, including those arrested during the earlier general strikes!*

It is clear for all to see that working people are being fleeced to pay for a crisis they are not responsible for. The economic crisis gripping Greece—a particularly severe expression of the world capitalist crisis—was triggered in the spring of last year as global financial capitalists, fearing that the heavily indebted Greek government would default on its loan obligations, began spurning Greek government bonds. The plummeting price of those bonds threatened European banks, especially in France and Germany —foreign financial institutions are exposed to some 340 billion euros in Greek public and private debt.

To try to head off the crisis, at least temporarily, the European Union (EU) and the IMF agreed last year to a 110 billion euro "rescue package" on condition that Athens impose draconian austerity measures on Greece's working people. The October 2009 elections replaced the right-wing New Democracy (ND) regime with the bourgeois-populist Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) of George Papandreou, with the bourgeoisie calculating that the masses would more readily accept "sacrifice" if demanded by PASOK. The PASOK government answered the EU and IMF's ultimatum with a year-long campaign of slashing public sector workers' wages, gutting pensions and ramping up taxes. These attacks hit hardest at the poorest in society, including immigrant workers. In addition, Greek officials, in response to EU/IMF demands that they raise cash by privatizing a host of state-owned enterprises, have launched what the bourgeois press describes as a "fire sale," auctioning off airports, ports and prime land.

European capitalists fear that a default by Greece could immediately pose a similar collapse by other heavily indebted countries such as Ireland and Portugal, which have already received bailouts from the EU and IMF, and Spain, whose economy is larger than that of Greece, Ireland and Portugal combined. Fearing the potentially catastrophic effects of such contagion, the EU/IMF hastily agreed last month on a second "rescue package" for Greece, amounting to a further 120 billion euros. Yet hardly anyone believes that these bailouts will do more than delay the inevitable default.

Everyone can see that the fate of the Greek working class, and much of the petty bourgeoisie, will be ever more dire without a radical solution. The working masses have demonstrated their combativity time and again. But the workers' leaders, whether the despised PASOK-loyal tops of the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) and the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY) or the far more militant-sounding Greek Communist Party (KKE) and its PAME labor front, have thus far succeeded in channeling workers' anger into what amounts to militant parliamentary lobbying. In effect, they appeal to the Greek capitalists to stand up to their senior partners in Germany and France. This nationalist class collaboration is a recipe for demoralization and defeat.

The allies of the Greek proletariat are to be found not among its "own" exploiters but among the workers elsewhere in Europe and beyond. A proletarian upheaval in Greece could trigger a wave of class struggle throughout Europe against the ever more brutal and incessant attacks of the capitalists against the jobs, benefits and living standards of all workers on the continent. A workers government in Greece would immediately repudiate the imperialist debt. Such an act would require a direct appeal to the proletariat, from Germany and France to Spain and Portugal, to come to the defense of their Greek class brothers and sisters against the combined forces of the European bourgeoisies.

As long as Greek workers are mobilized primarily against the foreign diktats of the IMF and EU, they will be unable to see that opposing the imperialists is intertwined with overthrowing the Greek bourgeoisie. The Greek government is not simply a tool of the European and other imperialist powers, as some signs in the Athens demonstrations suggest, but of the Greek bourgeoisie that has always exploited, suppressed and bled the working class in the pursuit of profit.

The question that is objectively posed is the need for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order and the establishment of working-class rule. Yet

*continued on page 10*

**Below: Mass June 28 protest in Athens during two-day general strike as parliament imposed sweeping austerity package. Inset: Victim of brutal cop attack on protesters the following day.**

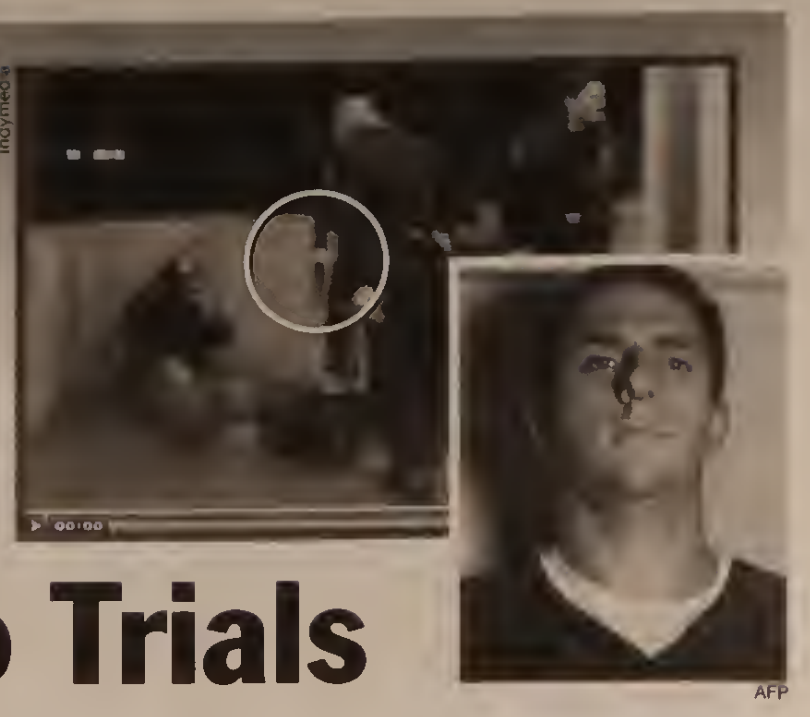
Reuters

KKE

**Workers Must Rule!**
**For a Socialist United States of Europe!**

Mavis Yorks

Winter/NY Times



Indymedia

AFP

Left: Catrina Wallace got 15 years on bogus drug charges in retaliation for organizing Jena Six protests in Louisiana. Right: Bay Area Rapid Transit cop Johannes Mehserle served eleven months for coldblooded killing of young black man Oscar Grant, captured in passenger's video.

# A Tale of Two Trials

On June 1, Catrina Wallace, a 31-year-old black single mother, was sentenced by a Louisiana court to 15 years on bogus drug distribution charges. Less than two weeks later, former Bay Area Rapid Transit cop Johannes Mehserle walked out of prison after serving a mere eleven months for his 1 January 2009 killing of Oscar Grant, an unarmed young black man who was shot pointblank as he lay face down on the ground. These two cases exemplify how little has fundamentally changed in racist capitalist America in the half century since the height of the civil rights movement.

Catrina Wallace was convicted by a jury with just one black member. At Mehserle's trial, which was moved from heavily black Oakland to Los Angeles, not one black person sat on the jury. Wallace was prosecuted as payback for her prominent role in organizing protests in defense of the Jena Six, young black men caught in a web of racist provocation and criminal prosecution in the Deep South. Mehserle received a meager sentence and early release in recognition of his role in enforcing racist law and order for the capitalist rulers.

This is what American "democracy" looks like: black people have no rights which the ruling class is bound to respect. Wallace was one of a dozen people arrested in July 2009 in a pre-dawn drug sweep involving over 150 cops from federal, state and local agencies. No drugs were ever found, and the only "evidence" was the word of a convicted drug dealer acting as a police informant. Wallace refused to plea-bargain, and on March 31 she was convicted on three counts of distribution of a controlled substance. Rather than allowing these sentences to be served concurrently (five years total), the court vindictively ordered her sentences to run consecutively, a measure usually reserved for serial killers and mafia dons. Free Catrina Wallace!

As we reported in "Jena, Louisiana: Free All Victims of Racist Cop Roundup!" (*WV* No. 978, 15 April), the plans for the drug sweep were hatched by Sheriff Scott Franklin in the immediate aftermath of the mass protest that shook Jena in September 2007. Tens of thousands of people from across the country marched through the town to protest on behalf of the Jena Six. That case began the previous year, when a black student received permission from a school official to sit under the so-called "white tree" at his high school, which is 80 percent white. The next day black students arrived to find three nooses hanging from a tree, leading to an impromptu protest some days later. That December, a white student found himself on the ground in a fight that ensued after he hurled the epithet "n----r" at a black youth, leading to the arrest of the six.

While Wallace's black skin marked her as yet another of the millions who have been warehoused in prison hells under the racist "war on drugs," Mehserle's blue uniform gave him a license to kill. While the killer cops maraud through the ghettos and barrios with impunity, Mehserle briefly saw the inside of a prison cell, thanks to numerous video images recorded by horrified passengers on the platform of the Fruitvale BART stop in East Oakland. Mehserle was shown standing over Grant, drawing his Sig Sauer P226 semiautomatic and firing into Grant's back as another cop held Grant face down with his hands behind his back, calling him a "bitch ass n----r." The jury embraced Mehserle's fairy tale that he had mistaken his gun, weighing over two and a half pounds, for a taser weighing less than a pound, and found him guilty of only "involuntary manslaughter." Declaring that "this is not a case about race," Judge Robert Perry gave Mehserle the lightest possible sentence.

Catrina Wallace joins hundreds of thousands of black men and women victimized by the "war on drugs." If her conviction is not overturned, even if she were to leave prison tomorrow, Wallace would be deprived of basic rights. She would be barred from such services as public housing and welfare, denied the right to possess firearms and blacklisted from jobs. She also loses the right to vote for 15 years. Quite a different future awaits Mehserle. According to his lawyer Michael Rains, Mehserle plans to return to the Bay Area, hoping to find work in sales or retail "because he's so good with people"!

Racist cop-judicial terror is integral to American capitalism, which was founded on black chattel slavery and is maintained on the brutal oppression of black people, who are overwhelmingly segregated on the bottom of society. Justice for Catrina Wallace and the millions of other victims of this barbaric system requires nothing less than a proletarian socialist revolution that will sweep racist capitalism into the dustbin of history.■

TROTSKY

LENIN

## Socialism and Technology

*In the wake of the Japanese nuclear disaster, much of the left calls for shutting down nuclear power plants, echoing the anti-technology nostrums of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois environmentalists. Addressing the needs of the planned economy of the former Soviet Union, Leon Trotsky stressed that the all-round, qualitative development of industry and technology, which is arrested and distorted under the capitalist profit system, is essential for socialist construction.*

We must not destroy technology. The proletariat has taken over the factories equipped by the bourgeoisie in that state in which the revolution found them. The old equipment is still serving us to this day. This fact most graphically and directly shows us that we do not renounce the "heritage." How could it be otherwise? After all, the revolution was undertaken, first and foremost, in order to get possession of that heritage.

However, the old technology, in the form in which we took it over, is quite unsuitable for socialism. It constitutes a crystallization of the anarchy of capitalist economy. Competition between different enterprises, chasing after profits, unevenness of development between different branches of the economy, backwardness of certain areas, parcelization of agriculture, plundering of human forces: all this finds in technology its expression in iron and brass. But while the machinery of class oppression can be smashed by a revolutionary blow, the productive machinery that existed under capitalist anarchy can be reconstructed only gradually. The completion of the restoration period, on the basis of the old equipment, has only brought us to the threshold of this tremendous task. We must carry it through at all costs.

—Leon Trotsky, "Culture and Socialism" (3 February 1926)
reprinted in *Problems of Everyday Life* (1973)

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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The closing date for news in this issue is July 5

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# Defend Public Sector Unions!

# Canada: Postal Workers Hit by Anti-Union Law

TORONTO—On June 26, Canada's parliament passed a law forcing nearly 50,000 Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) members to take down their picket lines and return to work or face huge fines and the seizure of union assets. Confronted with sweeping giveback demands by the government-owned Canada Post Corporation, CUPW had launched city-by-city rotating strikes more than three weeks earlier. When workers in Toronto and Montreal, the two main sorting and delivery centres, were brought out simultaneously in a one-day strike on June 14, the company responded with a country-wide lockout.

The Conservative (Tory) government of Stephen Harper announced its back-to-work edict less than a day later—an unconcealed act of collusion with union-busting management. In addition to banning strikes for four years and kicking Canada Post's rollback demands to a government-appointed "arbitrator," the law imposes a wage settlement even lower than the corporation's last offer. Making clear that it was declaring war on all union struggles, the government also moved to break a strike by 3,800 Air Canada customer service agents that began on June 14. In this case, Canadian Auto Workers union leaders quickly abandoned the strike, signing a deal that accepted multiple concessions, notably on pensions, the central issue in the strike.

The social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP), now Her Majesty's Official Opposition in parliament, postured against the Tories' back-to-work laws, and its leader Jack Layton put in a token appearance at a CUPW rally in Vancouver. But the NDP's claim to stand on the side of striking workers is sheer hypocrisy, as shown by its record of breaking strikes and jailing union leaders while running governments in various provinces. Down-the-line supporters of Canadian capitalism, in mid June the NDP MPs (Members of Parliament) unanimously endorsed the Tories' call for a three-month extension of NATO's brutal military assault on neocolonial Libya, in which Canada has been a full participant. The very day postal workers were forced to return to work, Canadian foreign affairs minister John Baird visited Canadian NATO troops in Italy, where he signed a bomb destined for use against Libya that included the message, "This postal service don't strike."

While the CUPW union leaders refused to swallow Canada Post's outrageous demands, they at no time sought to unleash the full power of the union on the picket lines. Their strategy of rotating strikes meant that the mail kept flowing until the company moved to shut down operations in preparation for the government intervention. The CUPW tops even offered to call off the strikes if management reinstated the old, expired contract. And once the lockout began, their only response was a series of punchless rallies featuring stale "solidarity" rhetoric from union bureaucrats and NDPers.

no credit

Doroszuk/Toronto Sun

**Locked-out postal workers rally in Toronto on June 16 following back-to-work edict by Prime Minister Stephen Harper (inset).**

We print below an article from *Spartacist Canada* No. 169 (Summer 2011), originally titled "All Labour Must Stand With CUPW!" which the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League, distributed heavily at CUPW pickets, rallies and meetings.

* * *

MAY 28—Some 48,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) are poised to walk off the job following an overwhelming strike vote of nearly 95 percent. In what amounts to a declaration of war, Canada Post is seeking to impose a two-tier wage and benefit system that will divide the workforce and roll back decades of union gains. For new hires, the postal bosses have vowed to slash pay by 30 percent, scrap guaranteed pension benefits, erode job security, lengthen work hours and cut vacation time. For retirees, they seek to ratchet up premiums for the extended health care plan. Across the board, they aim to eliminate the system of banked sick days in favour of a miserly short-term disability plan that would impose waiting periods for sick pay and reduce it by roughly 30 percent.

Canada Post has already eliminated 1,800 full-time jobs, mostly through attrition, and many more have been lost through contracting out. Management threatens to scrap 7,000 jobs in total once it completes its $2-billion mechanization scheme, the "Modern Post," now being tested at a new $100-million facility in Winnipeg. Within a decade, more than 80 percent of the existing unionized workforce is slated to retire, to be replaced by either machines or low-wage new hires.

At the same time, the postal bosses are driving the aging workforce to the wall. Under the guise of "reclassification," workers are being forced to do virtually any job management decrees, while ever more night shifts pose increased health problems and double the rate of injury. Postal workers have responded to management's abuses with work-to-rule campaigns and other protests. In south Winnipeg last November, 70 letter carriers wildcatted over unsafe work conditions ushered in by the new high-tech plant. Rural and suburban mail carriers, part of a separate bargaining unit of CUPW, staged a three-day walkout in the Edmonton suburb of St. Albert against cutbacks that threaten to reduce their annual pay by up to $28,000. On March 9, hundreds of letter carriers in suburban Montreal joined a protest over working conditions.

The ongoing capitalist economic crisis has already cost hundreds of thousands of workers their jobs across the country. Emboldened by its new majority status, the Harper government is now turning its fire from the unions in private-sector manufacturing to those in the public sector. At the centre of these attacks is Conservative MP Tony Clement. In his former role as industry minister, the rodential Clement presided over the 2009 bailout of the auto bosses, which saw workers in that industry lose as much as $22 an hour in wages and benefits. Now, as head of the Treasury Board, Clement vows to slash wages and ax entire government programs as part of the Tories' plan to cut spending by as much as $8 billion—ten percent—in the next year alone. Government spokesmen have mooted some 80,000 job cuts over the next several years.

What Harper and his gang *vow* and what they can *do* are by no means the same. The devastating blow to auto workers was not inevitable; it was made possible chiefly by the treachery of the bureaucracy of the Canadian Auto Workers union (CAW). Pushing nationalist protectionism instead of the necessary class struggle, CAW president Ken Lewenza obscenely trumpeted the sellout deal as a "victory." More recently in Toronto, in the face of the right-wing mayor's union-busting attack on city workers, the leadership of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 simply rolled over, giving up the right to strike without a fight. Such concessions can only embolden the ruling class and demoralize the workers.

There will either be class struggle or defeat. If Canada Post gets away with its attacks on CUPW, the results will redound against the struggles of all workers, especially in the public sector. On the other hand, a hard-fought union battle in the post office would have the potential to reverse the bosses' one-sided war against the working class. But this will not be easy. For years the labour tops have strangled the enormous potential social power of the proletariat, negotiating defeats, givebacks and concessions, and gravely weakening the trade unions. On a political level, this has been expressed through support to the social-democratic NDP, which sees class struggle as a threat to its goal of "responsibly" managing the capitalist state.

For its part, in the recent federal election, the CUPW leadership called on union members to "consider voting for a candidate who supports public postal service, good jobs and better child care." This could include anything from the NDP to the bourgeois-nationalist Bloc Québécois or even the Liberals. A fighting perspective in the unions is inseparably linked to the struggle to replace the existing pro-capitalist labour bureaucracy with a leadership that understands that the interests of the working class and the capitalist class have nothing in common.

Agence QMI

**Laval, Quebec: Hundreds of letter carriers protest deteriorating work conditions, March 9.**

### For a Class-Struggle Fight to Defeat Canada Post Attacks!

For decades, CUPW has been the *bête noir* of the capitalist class and its ideologues. This stems in large part from the militant postal strikes of the 1960s and 70s and from the union's longstanding support to struggles of the oppressed internationally. A *National Post* editorial (13 October 2010), "The Disgrace of CUPW," attacked the union for its participation in a May Day rally in Cuba and smeared its members as "bigots" for their defense of the besieged Palestinians.

Despite their radical reputation, however, the CUPW leaders have for years failed to lead the kind of struggle needed to throw back management's concerted drive against postal workers. There are

*continued on page 9*

**NOTICE**

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated August 5.**

# Young Spartacus

# WWP Hustles for Capitalist Politician Charles Barron

## Debate at SYC Class

On March 30 the Spartacus Youth Club held a class at the City College of New York, titled "The Class Nature of the State." Among the attendees was Caleb Maupin, a writer for *Workers World* newspaper, the party organ of the reformist, pro-Democratic Party outfit of the same name. He attempted to defend his party's fawning over Obama and support to Democratic city councilman Charles Barron by distorting the positions of Lenin and Trotsky.

We welcomed this opportunity to clarify for those present the differences between us and the Workers World Party (WWP), using the lessons laid out in Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, written on the eve of the October Revolution of 1917. The capitalist state—with the cops, courts, prisons and military at its core—exists to defend the bourgeoisie's "right" to exploit the working class. It cannot be reformed with the help of "progressive" bourgeois politicians but must be smashed and replaced with a workers state. As Lenin wrote in this seminal work, "Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists.... A Marxist is solely someone who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*."

During the discussion round, Maupin argued that the main difference between WWP and the Spartacist League/SYC was the question of "unity." He accused us of being ultraleft sectarians, claiming our "goal is to be an isolated sect." He claimed that WWP follows the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky to build a mass movement "united against a common enemy," while the Spartacists simply "go into that movement and say 'you suck, you suck, you suck, let's tear it apart'."

Our answers were given in the spirit of Lenin, who said: "Unity is a great thing and a great slogan. But what the workers' cause needs is the *unity of Marxists*, not unity between Marxists, and opponents and distorters of Marxism" ("Unity," 12 April 1914). An SYC member exposed what WWP means when it calls for unity, describing rallies he had attended that were organized by WWP's front group ANSWER before 2004: "Those rallies were for building support for the Democratic Party!" ANSWER's line, he said, was: "Let's get Bush out of office. Let's get some people in there who are going to end this war and bring our boys back home."

In contrast, our intervention into those protests aimed to break workers and youth disgusted with war from their support to the Democrats—the party that just a few years later would take the helm of the imperialist war machine with renewed ferocity. We called for military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the imperialist occupiers, without giving any political support to the anti-proletarian Islamic reactionaries or the anti-Communist butcher Saddam Hussein.

Another SYC comrade pointed out that WWP, in its appetite to be "united against a common enemy," hitched its wagon to the long train of leftist groupies on the Obama campaign trail. He quoted two articles from *Workers World* newspaper in 2008. The first proclaimed: "The election victory of Barack Obama will go down in history as a triumphant step forward in the struggle against racism and national oppression in the U.S." (14 November 2008). The second, by WWP leader Larry Holmes, enthused: "The feeling on the streets of cities large and small across the U.S. on election night was that now, anything is possible, and it is" (6 November 2008).

Maupin defended WWP's post-election euphoria for America's next top war criminal, saying, "That was the feeling on the streets." So of course WWP had to join in the celebration. Our comrades emphasized that WWP baits us as sectarian for refusing to adapt our program to the prevailing "feeling on the streets" but instead struggling to raise the consciousness of the working class.

Now that Obama's hands are thoroughly drenched in blood, from the "surge" in Afghanistan to the brand-new murderous imperialist adventure in Libya, now that working people are increasingly bitter over the capitalist economic crisis and anti-union attacks, WWP tries in vain to pressure Obama to act in the interests of the workers and oppressed who voted for him. On March 28, WWP's International Action Center issued a call for an emergency demo the next day to protest Obama in Harlem, asking, "How do we hold him accountable? Mass protest is our most viable option." But Obama is very accountable...to the Wall Street bankers and other capitalists whose interests he swore to protect. Promise made, promise kept.

The WWP has a history of supporting Democrats, especially black ones, that spans nearly half a century. Back in 1965, a leaflet by the Spartacist League exposed WWP's support to black Democrat Jesse Gray in his campaign for New York City mayor and pointed out that "The Democratic Party and its murderous, lying leaders ***are*** the most dangerous enemies of the working and colonial people today—in Vietnam, in the Congo, in Santo Domingo, in Bogalusa [Louisiana], and in Harlem." From Jesse Gray to "Jessie Jackson for president" in 1984, to Al Sharpton for NYC mayor again in 1997, nothing has changed for the WWP.

Their hero of today is Charles Barron. In articles like "Charles Barron Is a Fighter" (14 August 2006), *Workers World* breathlessly gushes that this capitalist politician is a "Black revolutionary." In response to our comrades' exposure of Barron as a left-talking Democrat, Maupin rushed to his defense:

> "Charles Barron is a Marxist. His politics are not perfect, but I, for one, see a former Black Panther leaving the Democratic Party, calling for socialist revolution and having meetings with various Marxist parties around the world as a positive force."

If this WWP activist saw Charles Barron leaving the Democratic Party, it must have been in a dream because Barron is still a registered Democrat! When he was called out on this point, Maupin admitted it was true. Apparently WWP's definition of a Marxist includes card-carrying capitalist politicians.

Charles Barron serves a useful role for his capitalist masters in the Democratic Party as the in-house oppositionist. He presents himself as a fighter for the oppressed who calls for "revolutionary change." But Barron's real role is to bring all those who might be disaffected with the racist capitalist system back into the fold of the Democratic Party.

In the early morning of 25 November 2006, NYPD cops gunned down 23-year-old Sean Bell in a storm of 50 bullets just hours before his wedding. In the wake of this atrocity, Barron was right out in front at protests. His demands were for cleaning up the image of the capitalist state, calling for indictments against the cops and the resignation of Police Commissioner Kelly. As the ghettos continued to seethe, Barron stood shoulder to shoulder with billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg when he appealed for "dialogue" in response to Bell's killing. Barron said, "If we don't get an indictment, there is going to be an explosion" (WNYC News, 22 December 2006). Indeed, his job is to get ahead of any explosion in order to contain it.

Less than two years later, crediting the NYPD for an "excellent job," Barron emphasized, "I am not anti-police. I'm anti-police brutality" (*New York Times*, 22 July 2008). Throughout his career as a city council member, he has supported Bloomberg's efforts to pass stricter gun control laws, which seek to ensure that the "gang in blue" hold a monopoly on the use of organized force. Wielding his occasionally radical rhetoric and his claimed prior membership in the Black Panther Party, Charles Barron offers the same capitalist program as the rest of his colleagues.

In line with this strategy, Barron formed the bourgeois Freedom Party (FP) last summer. The stated reason for the FP's formation was that the 2010 New York State Democratic slate did not include any black candidates. At a 17 June 2010 news conference, Barron declared that the party's aim was "to get some parity and inclusion for Black people in the Democratic Party." WWP seems to have found true love in this lash-up. They write swooning articles with headlines like "Support the Freedom Party!" (16 July 2010) and "Freedom Party Challenges Racist Status Quo" (22 October 2010).

The Freedom Party takes its name from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), which grew out of the voter registration campaigns during the civil rights movement. The MFDP was a militant civil rights organization that lacked a revolutionary programmatic alternative to capitalism and instead shared Martin Luther King's illusions in the party of John F. Kennedy. At the 1964 National Democratic Party convention, the Johnson/Humphrey machine crushed its attempt to unseat the all-white, Jim Crow Mississippi delegation.

Learning from the bitter experience of that convention, Stokely Carmichael and other militants of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) advocated a break with the Democratic Party. Unlike Barron's attempt to get "parity and inclusion" within that racist capitalist party, Carmichael said it was "as ludicrous for Negroes to join [the Democratic Party] as it would have been for Jews to join the Nazi party in the 1930s."

They joined with others to form the Lowndes County (Alabama) Freedom Organization, which took a black panther as its symbol. It was important because it was organized in opposition to the Democrats and because it openly advocated the right of armed self-defense. Shortly after, in Oakland, California, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was formed, inspired

Edward Reed

**Left: Charles Barron (at right) with Al Sharpton and NYC mayor Bloomberg at 27 November 2006 press conference appealing for calm following cop killing of Sean Bell. Reformist Workers World Party hails Democrat Barron and his Freedom Party.**

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# Letter from a Teacher: Charter School Hell

*The Obama administration has been leading the charge in a bipartisan nationwide assault on public education and teachers unions, attacking "failing" schools in black and inmigrant communities and threatening teachers with layoffs (see: "Obama's War on Public Education," WV No. 967, 22 October 2010). Meanwhile, some of the country's biggest billionaires and Democratic Party hacks are waging a rabid media campaign to blame teachers and their unions for the disastrous conditions of the public schools, while deceptively showcasing a select few carefully manicured charter schools as the future of education. Charter schools are an attack on the basic democratic right to public education. They further increase segregation in the schools, and for the majority of black and minority youth, offer nothing but a holding pen, while lining the pockets of the owners with public funds.*

*Printed below is a letter from a supporter of the Spartacus Youth Clubs who is a teacher at a charter school.*

* * *

Pan-African News Wire

**Philadelphia, June 2: Students protest against their school becoming a charter school.**

I am forced to take on more than the average teacher and get paid less than the average teacher. I get paid thirteen thousand dollars less than a teacher with my experience at a public school in my area. I have to do a bunch of extracurricular activities that in a public school would be optional. I have to supervise four after-school activities a week. This adds an extra four hours to my workweek. In a public school a teacher would get paid extra for this. In the school where I work, I do not get paid anything for this. To be honest, I do not have it as bad as some of the other teachers in the school. I recently heard from two teachers at my school that they have to stay until 6 p.m. one day a week to supervise an after-school activity and they do not get paid anything for it. I must note that our contract states that we must be at the school until 3:45 p.m. I also have to substitute during my preparation period if there is another teacher absent. This happens at least once a week. The reason why we have to do this so often is that the school does not usually get a sub if there is a teacher absent. We do not get paid extra for covering for other teachers. Subs cost money, and why pay for a sub when you can just get the teachers to do it for free? I hear that public school teachers get paid around $30 to $60 for every period that they cover.

Of course we cannot complain about any of this, since we do not have a union to defend us. We also do not get tenure. Our contract is up for renewal every year. I have not been at this school long, but I hear that the charter school company that I work for does not usually give raises to teachers. I do not know what happens if a teacher asks for a raise, but I'm pretty sure that any teacher that insists on a raise is not rehired. If a teacher wants to quit, they have to give two-week notice, but the charter school company can fire a teacher for any vague reason, like "inefficiency" or "immorality." Unlike a union shop, where a contract covers an entire workgroup, each teacher has an individual contract with the company, which leads to unequal compensation, benefits, etc. It is usually the case that when we show up at our weekly staff meetings we are told by the administration that we will have to do extra work, like supervising outside before the beginning of school or in the halls during passing periods, etc. Of course we cannot say no. They are not asking us if we can do it, they are telling us we should do it.

Charter schools are notorious for not providing enough funding for programs for students with disabilities, even though they get money from the state for such programs. This is also the case at my school. For example, I have a teenage student who cannot read or write above a first-grade level. This is a problem since a lot of reading and writing is involved in my class. I have other students with learning disabilities in my class, and I do adapt my instruction and assignments to fit their needs. These students are able to comprehend most of the material presented, although they need extra help. There are no adaptations that I can make to my assignments which will fit the needs of a student who struggles to read at a first-grade level. This student should be in a special education class where his needs will be better met. At the very least, this student should be provided with an aide to help him in the class. The reason that he is not in such a class is that we do not have one in our school. The charter company would have to spend some extra money to set up such a class. This is also the reason why he was not provided with an aide. The company is not willing to spend money on aides. There is a teacher at our school who works with students with disabilities, but her time is limited since she teaches general education classes. This is despite the fact that federal law says that even charter schools must provide special education to students with disabilities.

The school facilities are also not up to the same standard as your average public school. Our school is located in a commercial building. The charter school company rents out half of this building from some company. This does not seem that bad at first, but you might change your mind about this when you find out that the classrooms that we are in are also shared with other people who have nothing to do with the school or the people who own the building. The result of this is that things always get moved around or end up missing. I've found ways to deal with this but it frustrates me, since I know that I would not have these problems were I in a public school. Moreover, the building is not built well and things are always breaking. Door handles come off, faucets break and the ceiling begins to leak every time it rains. This is also the case with other charter schools that I've been to. One charter school was a warehouse, which had been used to store produce, and another used to be a car garage.

This charter company sees itself more as a business than a public educational organization. For example, we have a CEO instead of a superintendent. That is his actual title, CEO. It's clear that the people in charge are in it for the money. And they are using that money to fatten their pockets and buy themselves eighty-thousand-dollar cars. I know that they have these types of cars because I see them parked in our parking lot whenever someone from the main office comes to observe our school! We don't get paid on time, get raises, get subs, or get materials for our class because of the "current financial crisis" and yet these people buy Porsches and Land Rovers. But that's how education works under capitalism.

All of the teachers at my school are tired and really want things to change. Recently I had a discussion with some of them about how we need to organize and how things would be so much better if we had a union. Just so you know, teachers at charter schools are overworked, underpaid, and furious!■

Bob Daemmrich

**Students forced to share desks in overcrowded classroom, San Antonio.**

by Lowndes County, and soon spread to other cities nationwide. The FBI unleashed a campaign of terror, resulting in 38 Panthers murdered and hundreds more imprisoned, some of whom continue to rot in prison to this day. But many Panther spokesmen and other would-be black radicals were co-opted into the Democratic Party.

At the time, the Spartacist League raised the slogan for a Freedom-Labor Party, warning that "the slogan 'black power' must be clearly defined in *class*, not racial terms, for otherwise the 'black power' movement may become the black wing of the Democratic Party" ("Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom," *Spartacist* supplement, May-June 1967). As the trajectory of Barron and many others vividly demonstrates, this is exactly what happened. By supporting this wing of the Democratic Party, WWP joins those who perpetuate the lie that black equality can be achieved within the confines of the capitalist system. In contrast, we raise the banner of revolutionary integrationism: as we fight against every manifestation of racist discrimination, we make clear to the working class that genuine freedom for black people in America is impossible short of socialist revolution, the historical task of the multiracial working class.

If the MFDP's futile attempt in 1964 to reform the Democratic Party was tragic, Barron's attempted reincarnation of the MFDP is simply a farce. The MFDP braved racist Klan terror and police repression in their courageous effort to beat back the brutal Jim Crow system, while Barron was simply disappointed by union-busting governor Cuomo's failure to put more black faces on his slate. He is cynically maneuvering to expand his influence in the Democratic Party.

At the SYC class, in order to justify WWP's reformist, class-collaborationist politics, Maupin made a clumsy attempt to falsify the history of the Russian Revolution, slandering Lenin: "If your goal is to lead the workers to overthrow the system you need slogans like 'peace, land and bread,' not slogans like 'Kerensky sucks, for a true ideologically pure party,' you know what I mean?" Kerensky was the leader of the capitalist provisional government in Russia in the wake of the February 1917 Revolution that ousted the tsar. Maupin sought to disappear the fact that it was only because Lenin fought for an ideologically steeled party *in opposition to Kerensky's government and against all the reformists who supported it* that the October Revolution took place at all.

Now, Lenin never raised the slogan "Kerensky sucks," but as a student at our class pointed out: "My understanding of Lenin's *April Theses* was that he said, 'No support to the provisional government'." He added that Lenin "denounced almost every single party that was there at the time. You can call that sectarianism, but I think it's revolutionary. That's really taking leadership into your own hands, and I think that is really what a revolutionary party has to do."

So we do know what Workers World "means": If they had been around at the time of the Russian Revolution, they would have been on the opposite side of the barricades, "uniting" with Kerensky and so-called progressives against Lenin and the Bolsheviks who were fighting to smash capitalism and bring the workers to power. They probably would have sent representatives into Bolshevik meetings to say "Kerensky is a fighter," and while Kerensky was doing his duty to his capitalist masters, they would have held rallies to "hold Kerensky accountable."

In contrast, the SYC stands for the program of Lenin and Trotsky against all types of reformists, fake Marxists and apologists for capitalist politicians. Only a Bolshevik leadership can truly unite the working class and all the oppressed in a fight against capitalism. It is the reformists who divide the working class, following the lines of division fostered by the capitalists, in competition for a bigger "share" of the crumbs from the capitalists' table.■

# Germany

# Greens' Anti-Nuclear Hysteria Amnesties Capitalism

The following excerpted article is translated from *Spartakist* No. 188 (May 2011), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). Almost four months after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan, some 2,500 workers and engineers are still struggling to stabilize three crippled reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi plant. Although the full extent of the damage remains unknown, Tokyo for the first time early last month acknowledged that fuel rods in three reactors had probably melted through their inner containment vessels. According to state officials, the amount of radiation released in the first week was more than twice the original estimate.

With the crisis still unresolved, the Japanese government has abandoned plans to expand its nuclear power industry and may forego it altogether. Several European countries are following suit. On June 30, the Bundestag (German parliament) voted to close all of the country's nuclear power plants by 2022, making it the first major nation with a nuclear industry to completely renounce the technology in years.

As in Germany and elsewhere following the disaster in Japan, much of the reformist left in the U.S. echoed petty-bourgeois environmental groups in beating the drums of opposition to nuclear power. In a *Socialist Worker* article titled "The Nightmare That Could Happen Here" (31 March), the International Socialist Organization opined, "The potential exists to build a new vibrant anti-nuclear movement here in the U.S." For their part, the fake Trotskyists of Socialist Action headlined their March 18 article on the Japan crisis "No More Nukes!" The pretensions of these organizations to socialism are once again shown to be so much hot air. Playing to the antitechnology prejudices of the "green" milieu, they hope to conjure up another "movement" premised on the continuation of the capitalist profit system, which sacrifices safety for the bottom line and blocks the rational, full development of technology.

* * *

Millions of people around the world are gazing anxiously toward Fukushima, where power plant workers are risking their lives in a struggle to prevent further explosions that would release yet more radioactive material from the nuclear facility. Many people are concerned over the safety of nuclear power plants in their own countries. Workers experience daily in their own workplaces how speedup is intensified and on-the-job safety undermined by the drive for profits. It's not hard for them to imagine that the capitalists run their nuclear power plants much the same way. While power companies and capitalist governments claim that nuclear plants are safe, and they may even institute a few safety controls in the hope of calming people down, environmental organizations are beating the drum against nuclear technology and praising "alternative energy sources" such as wind turbines as a replacement for nuclear power.

Michael Wassenberg

**March 26 Hamburg protest against nuclear power.**

Some of the most virulent reaction is to be found in Germany. As soon as the catastrophe in Japan became known, nationwide "warning vigils" were organized against nuclear power. On March 12, more than 50,000 people formed a 27-mile-long human chain from the Neckar-Westheim nuclear plant to Stuttgart to protest the extension of operating licenses granted last fall to the seven oldest nuclear reactors by the CDU/FDP [Christian Democrat/Free Democrat] coalition government led by Angela Merkel. A three-month moratorium on license extensions for nuclear power plants was intended to provide a little breathing space for the government and the energy bosses, until fear in Germany—which in some places had risen to hysteria—receded. In the March 27 elections to state parliaments in Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz, the Greens doubled their voting totals.

The petty-bourgeois anti-nuclear movement, with the reformist left in its wake, is channeling rage away from the capitalists, blaming nuclear power itself and, beyond that, modern large-scale industry. In this way, the reformists assist in solidifying capitalist rule, ultimately increasing the danger they claim to be fighting. At the same time, the nuclear weapons arsenals in the hands of the major imperialist powers could extinguish life on earth many times over—this is the main threat to the existence of mankind. Fukushima is a nuclear accident caused by the capitalists' drive for profits, their corruption and irresponsibility. The atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the calculated mass murder of hundreds of thousands of people, carried out by "democratic" U.S. imperialism.

While the environmental movement may at times rightly protest against crimes of capitalism, nonetheless there is nothing inherently leftist or progressive about environmentalism. In Germany today, it stretches from anti-racist groups like Ökolinx through the bourgeois Greens right into the fascist National Democratic Party (NPD), which also calls for abandoning nuclear power. The Green Party itself was constructed in the late 1970s by demoralized ex-leftists who had turned away from the working class and sought their political fortunes in the petty-bourgeois environmental protests. The ideology of the ecology movement sees modern industry and technology as the root of all evil. It looks to the past and is hostile to science. The Green milieu is permeated by and overlaps with esoteric cultism, practitioners of "alternative medicine" and other such backward nonsense. An example is the Greens' Renate Künast, who as Federal Minister [for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture] advocated using homeopathic sugar globules in farming.

Our Marxist perspective is diametrically opposed to this. It is capitalist property relations that are the problem. Capitalist competition means that any efforts in the direction of "sustainability" and "friendliness to the environment" that result in additional costs bring with them the threat of bankruptcy. Factories do not produce goods according to need but in quantities that can be sold at a profit. It is necessary to overthrow capitalism through socialist revolution, in which the working class seizes power and expropriates the capitalist class. Only when the productive forces are placed in the service of all humanity will it be possible to develop those forces through science and technology to the point where hunger and poverty become a thing of the past; this improved technology will of course also alleviate the destruction of the environment.

## Anti-Nuclear Power: The Left Signs Up

Sections of the SPD [Social Democrats], which was originally a strong advocate of nuclear power plant construction during the chancellorships of Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, are now calling for Germany to abandon nuclear power. The Left Party [composed mainly of ex-Stalinists and former SPDers] is attempting to portray itself as the most determined opponent of atomic power. It is fishing among the rank and file of the environmental movements, many of whom are quite disillusioned with the Greens themselves, implicitly accusing the Greens of opportunism for not having pushed through the abandonment of nuclear power in 1998-2005, when they were governing the country in coalition with the SPD.

This criticism is *not* from the left. The supposed opportunism of the Greens is an expression of the fact that their "back to nature" program is a reactionary utopia. Without industry, the majority of mankind would simply starve to death. It is reactionary to reproach the Greens for not having actually made their program a reality. Here the Left Party casts a lustful eye at the next federal elections, offering its services to the Greens as a potential coalition partner in an SPD/Green/Left Party government after 2013.

Some 250,000 people attended the March 26 mobilizations held in Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne and Munich under the slogan "Shut down all nuclear power plants!" They were organized through a trans-class popular front consisting of environmental organizations and the Greens as well as the Left Party along with parts of the SPD and the DGB trade-union federation. The aim was to channel the justifiable anger away from the capitalist state and the profit-driven corporations and direct it onto a parliamentary course.

A more leftist example of spreading illusions is the Workers Power Group (Gruppe Arbeitermacht, GAM), German section of the League for a Fifth Interna-

dapd

**Police attack demonstrators protesting transport of spent nuclear fuel from France to Germany earlier this year.**

tional. In the April issue of its journal *Neue Internationale* the GAM observes that radioactive contamination from the nuclear incident at Fukushima was a true tragedy "because it was preventable, not simply a natural catastrophe, but rather must be placed fully at the door of capitalism." Simultaneously, the GAM capitulates to the Greens and the Left Party, asserting that the problem was technology itself: "The events surrounding Fukushima show that atomic power presents an insurmountable risk." This is only to conclude: "Fukushima demonstrates that the modern productive forces, that development can benefit all human society only if the rule of capital and its state is broken. The alternative to nuclear power is not just wind and sun, but socialism!"

The GAM's gyrations become much more comprehensible when you take a look at the front page of the April *Neue Internationale*: "Switch Off Black-Yellow!" [referring to the CDU/Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Free Democrats]. In the state elections the GAM had warned that "not voting helps Mappus" [CDU premier of Baden-Württemberg] and called to "vote for the Left Party—but organize struggle!" (*Neue Internationale*, March 2011). This makes clear how the GAM intends to institute "workers' control over the energy industry": via a "left" parliamentary, i.e., capitalist, SPD/Green government, preferably with the participation of the Left Party.

Such leftists have adapted to and deepened the massive retrogression of political consciousness stemming from the destruction of the Soviet Union. They stand opposed even to Marxism's elementary vision of progress: the worldwide elimination of hunger and poverty through the all-sided development of the productive forces.

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**November 2010: Trade unionists block access to nuclear power plant in Cruas-Meysse, France, to protest pension cutbacks.**

Australasian Spartacist

**September 2007: Spartacist League of Australia calls to defend Chinese, North Korean nuclear capabilities at Sydney protest against Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.**

In the face of this farce we reaffirm what we wrote in "Nuclear Power and the Workers Movement" (*Kommunistische Korrespondenz* No. 18, May 1977, the predecessor to *Spartakist* [also printed in *WV* No. 146, 25 February 1977]):

> "As Marxists we generally strongly support the introduction of new technology, including the development, construction and operation of nuclear fission reactors. Certainly proponents of a socialist society based on material abundance have a vastly different viewpoint on this subject than ecological crackpots who in effect seek a return to pre-industrial society. At the same time we point out that the economic advisibility of nuclear fission power can only be judged within the framework of an internationally planned socialist economy.
>
> "There are very real problems of safety connected with nuclear reactors. As throughout industry, we demand union control of working conditions and, where there are specific hazards, action to shut down dangerous facilities. But beyond this we have no particular interest in determining how the bourgeoisie meets its energy needs. Those who assume that 'wide public discussion' within the framework of capitalist rule will satisfactorily resolve this question are guilty of sowing the worst utopian/reactionary/pacifist illusions."

## Raw Materials and Self-Sufficiency

There was turmoil in Germany when Russia turned off the spigot of natural gas to Ukraine in the winter of 2006 after Ukraine refused to pay the higher natural gas prices imposed by Russia in retaliation for Ukraine's tilting to the West. It was in this context that Hermann Scheer, the SPD's spokesman on energy questions and winner of the "Alternative Nobel Prize," articulated an encapsulation of bourgeois "alternative" energy strategies in a 9 January 2007 interview on German radio:

> "In 1950 in Germany, 5 percent of our energy consumption depended on imports. Today, this figure is around 75 percent and it is much the same for other countries. This is related to the fact that there simply aren't that many countries where petroleum, natural gas, coal or uranium can be extracted, while the need for energy is universal. The logical conclusion is that one can escape this trap of energy dependence only through a comprehensively devised mobilization of renewable energies, so as to replace fossil fuels and nuclear energy."

This explains why the SPD/Green government decided to abandon nuclear energy in 2002 as it pursued a more independent course vis-à-vis U.S. imperialism (for example, its rejection of the 2003 Iraq war).

The capitalist great powers strive to increase their self-sufficiency so as to be less subject to blackmail and to maintain a stronger position in the world market and in the struggle for resources. The heyday of nuclear power plant construction was the 1970s, in the wake of the oil crisis of late 1973, when the capitalists aimed to decrease dependence on imported oil. In addition, domestic German coal extraction became less and less profitable and oil reserves were declining in the U.S., while Japan and France possessed hardly any domestic resources from which to generate energy.

## How the Bourgeois State Serves the Capitalists

In "Corruption, Cronyism, Fukushima" (31 March), *Spiegel* online gives examples of how the state and businesses are intertwined. There are 20,000 instances documented by the Japanese government of a civil servant shifting over to the private sector following retirement and "then frequently working for a company that he had previously regulated as a civil servant." TEPCO [Tokyo Electric Power Company, owner of the Fukushima Daiichi plant] knew how to make "optimal" use of such connections to maximize profit. In the '80s and '90s TEPCO repeatedly falsified data from inspections, including the number of cracks in reactor containment vessels. [For more information see "Japan Tsunami Disaster and Capitalist Criminality" (*WV* No. 978, 15 April)].

Germany (or the U.S., etc.) is no different. The nuclear incident in Block A of [utility giant] RWE's Biblis power plant in 1987 demonstrates the same intertwining of regulatory authority and the nuclear industry in Germany. When the reactor was powered up on 16 December 1987, a cooling system ventilator, which had been opened during the three-day shutdown to discharge the remaining heat, failed to close. It took over 15 hours for the problem to be noticed. Even then the reactor was not shut down immediately, as the situation demanded, since this would have meant writing off at least a day of production at full power. In addition, there was the possibility of the authorities getting riled up. Instead, an attempt was made to shut the valve while the reactor was running, causing 300°C [572°F] radioactive water from the primary cooling system to spurt at high pressure outside the reactor containment vessel. It was extremely fortunate that a second safety valve didn't seize up like the first one and closed after seven seconds.

The [Hessian Environmental] Ministry and government investigators kept the matter secret for nearly a year. Only thanks to research by the U.S. technical journal *Nucleonics Week* was the fact exposed that Biblis had risked a leak of a type that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in a 1975 study had determined would cause the system to fail, "initiating a core meltdown and the escape of radioactivity outside the containment."

The 2007 Greenpeace report "Black Book on Obstacles to Climate Protection—The Intertwining of Politics and the Energy Industry" names ten members of the Bundestag with seats on either the advisory or the supervisory board of the five largest German energy companies, among them the SPD and CDU/CSU spokesmen for energy questions. Twenty-eight former politicians or top governmental regulators are currently working for the large energy companies.

## Reformist Illusions in the Bourgeois State

The intertwining of state and business is not peculiar to Japan or Germany, nor is it limited to energy companies. Rather it is an expression of the class character of the bourgeois state. In *The State and Revolution* (1917) Lenin explains the teachings of Marx and Engels regarding the state:

> "The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise, 'the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital.'...
>
> "In a democratic republic, Engels continues, 'wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely,' first, by means of the 'direct corruption of officials' (America); secondly, by means of an 'alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange' (France and America)."

First, capitalist governments shifted the costs of the ongoing financial crisis caused by the banks onto the shoulders of working people. The lust for profits of concerns like TEPCO as well as state corruption then endangered the existence of millions of Japanese. Faced with such a state of affairs, the Left Party sees a "danger" that workers' and leftists' illusions in bourgeois democracy might suffer some "erosion." Left Party leader Gregor Gysi opined in a speech in the Bundestag (March 17):

> "In the past year, during the financial crisis, everyone could see how the speculators and heads of the banks were dominating events and politics.... Only if politics can acquire the courage and the power to breach the dominance of these speculators, bank heads, nuclear power and other industry lobbyists and secure the primacy of democratic institutions will we be acting for our population, will we save our democracy and live up to our function as representatives of the people in the Bundestag!"

Well, the state governments in which the Left Party participates, as in Berlin and Brandenburg, are no less servile to capitalism. These capitalist governments guarantee the "dominance" of the banks and industry. In Berlin, the SPD/Left Party [city] Senate bailed out the Berlin Bankgesellschaft bank, which cronyism and speculation had driven into bankruptcy, at the expense of the working people, ripping up contracts, slashing wages and eliminating public services.

And when there's resistance, then the core of the state—the "special armed bodies," i.e., the police, army and prisons—are employed. This is seen in attacks on picket lines, as occurred recently in France in the oil refinery strikes that were protesting the assault on pensions, or the bludgeoning of leftist demonstrators to clear the way for a Nazi mobilization, as happened repeatedly in Berlin under the SPD/Left Party Senate.

## Profits at the Expense of Safety

At Fukushima Daiichi 450 workers, mostly unskilled and hired through subcontractors, are risking their lives to fight a catastrophe for which the TEPCO bosses are responsible. As of April 1, 21 workers had been subjected to excessive radiation with more to follow, since, according to the government, it will take months before the power plant is sealed off. For decades, nuclear firms have employed low-wage contract workers. This has been spurred on by privatization and, in Europe, the intensified competition deriving from the liberalization of the European Union energy market. *Die Zeit* (31 March) wrote that hundreds of temporary workers died of radiation sickness in the '70s in Japan.

In Germany, there are 23,000 contract workers employed in this field. In 1985, in his well-known book *Ganz unten* [*Rock*

*continued on page 8*

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# Germany...

*(continued from page 7)*

*Bottom*], Günter Wallraff, who had disguised himself as a Turkish "guest worker," described his experiences as Ali Levant Sigirioglu. As we wrote in "Turkish Workers in the German Fourth Reich" (*WV* No. 399, 14 March 1986):

> "The final act in Wallraff's career as Ali came when friends of his made entrepreneur Vogel [an SPD member] a fake offer to see just how far he would go. Six Turks were supposedly needed to repair equipment in a power plant poisoned by escaping radioactive fumes. To avoid a scandal only Turks who would soon be returning to Turkey could be chosen so they would not die in West Germany. Vogel had no qualms accepting this deal, demonstrating that West German capitalists would *kill* foreign workers in order to make a profit."

Wallraff accused the nuclear concerns of sending mostly ethnic Turkish contract workers "into radiation" where they were "consumed like fuel." A report by former nuclear workers in the *Berliner Zeitung* (8 January 1999) confirms that this is common practice.

Training specialists is costly, and the trained specialists are themselves expensive. Thus, as few specialists as possible are hired, with barely trained and unskilled laborers left to do the dangerous hands-on work. All of these are employed by subsidiaries. Even under "normal" operating conditions, this is often fatal for the workers, but it generates a fountain of profits. If, however, there is a breakdown in the highly complex nuclear plants, as now in Fukushima, it paves the way for catastrophes. There is no competent, well-rehearsed team, one that knows what has to be done, with sufficient numbers to reduce the radiation health risk by frequently rotating workers.

Far from being an "anomaly," these conditions make evident the regular workings of capitalism. In Volume One of *Capital*, Karl Marx explains:

> "*Après moi le déluge!* [After me, the deluge!] is the watchword of every capitalist and of every capitalist nation. Hence Capital is reckless of the health or length of life of the labourer, unless under compulsion from society. To the outcry as to the physical and mental degradation, the premature death, the torture of overwork, it answers: Ought these to trouble us since they increase our profits? But looking at things as a whole, all this does not, indeed, depend on the good or ill will of the individual capitalist. Free competition brings out the inherent laws of capitalist production, in the shape of external coercive laws having power over every individual capitalist."

Since this was written in 1867, free competition led to the forming of monopolies, to monopoly capitalism. As analyzed by Lenin, domestic monopolies intensify competition on the world market, i.e., they reproduce and intensify the contradictions of capitalism.

Despite not being all that numerous, energy workers possess enormous social power. The trade unions must lead a struggle for the companies to make contract workers regular employees and for their appropriate training and remuneration as well as lifelong health care. The dangerous lack of specialists and the reduction in regular fixed staff must be fought through class struggle. Such a struggle would generate strong support in the working class, which has the greatest interest in the safety of power plants, especially nuclear plants. But the trade-union tops at BCE [Mining, Chemistry, Energy Industrial Union] and ver.di [public employees union], in which nuclear workers are organized, instead pursue a policy of class collaboration. Again and again, BCE has issued statements jointly with capitalist associations calling for maintaining "competitiveness" and "Production-Site Germany."

The union misleaders limit the workers' demands to what is "acceptable" to declining, rotting capitalism. The fight for basic needs must be linked to the struggle for expropriation of the energy concerns without compensation. This must be part of the fight for a socialist revolution to establish an internationally planned economy under the control of workers councils. Only then, based on an international division of labor, will it be possible to consider whether it is really necessary to construct nuclear power plants in thickly settled earthquake zones like Japan.

DPA

Reuters

**As foreign minister, Green Party leader Joschka Fischer, shown above in military vehicle belonging to NATO's Kosovo occupation force, oversaw German imperialism's participation in 1999 war against Serbia. Right: Passenger train in Serbia destroyed by U.S./NATO bombing.**

## Pacifism Disarms the Workers, Not the Capitalists

In his March 17 response in the Bundestag to Chancellor Merkel's governmental statement on the conclusions to be drawn from the events in Japan, Gregor Gysi stated: "Anyone having at his disposal the technology for the peaceful use of atomic energy and the ability to produce electric current from nuclear plants is also potentially capable of producing nuclear weapons.... The examples of Iran and North Korea demonstrate that these dangers have not been eliminated. Consistent initial steps must be taken toward finally destroying all the nuclear weapons in the world. Only then will the international community have the right to ban the production of new nuclear weapons worldwide."

We've been hearing such disarmament appeals since the "peace" movement of the 1980s. As against the appeals of the pacifists for the Soviet Union to carry out nuclear self-disarmament, we were damn glad that the Soviet Union had developed, produced and had at the ready the atom bomb. Otherwise, U.S. imperialism would certainly have made a horrific reality of its atomic first-strike scenarios—that was the message of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Hatred for the Soviet Union sprang from its class character as a workers state that continued to embody the gains of the 1917 October Revolution despite the degeneration it underwent under Stalin starting in late 1923. This is equally true of China and North Korea today, which escaped nuclear incineration in the 1950s, as called for at the time by U.S. generals, only thanks to the existence of the Soviet nuclear shield. The destruction of the Soviet Union by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92 has made the world a much ***more dangerous*** place for the oppressed. The imperialists can now tromp around on the neocolonial oppressed peoples of the world unhindered by the Soviet military counterweight. Having starved Iraq since 1991, bombed it flat and finally bloodily occupied it in 2003, the imperialists now have Iran in their crosshairs for supposedly intending to develop nuclear weapons. The example of Iraq, which could be leveled because it possessed no weapons of mass destruction, is instructive: Iran ***needs*** nuclear weapons to ward off invasion by the imperialists.

The fundamental basis of pacifism is support to capitalism. It disarms only the working class and the oppressed, never the capitalist class. In fact, it actually contributes to the preparation for war, through spreading the illusion that capitalism can be made peaceable. This is also shown by the example of the Greens, who like to put on a show as saviors of mankind and the environment. In their coalition government with the SPD in 1999, they pushed through German participation in the NATO war against Serbia, followed in 2001 by participation in the occupation of Afghanistan. Incidentally, among the weapons raining death and destruction down on the Serbian population were shells made of depleted uranium. Today, the Greens are some of the most vehement warmongers against Libya, advocating sending in the Bundeswehr [German army].

## Anti-Communist Hysteria Over Chernobyl

Even today, in the reactions to Fukushima one can discern reflections of the anti-Communist arrogance toward the [1986] Chernobyl nuclear accident, which was dismissed essentially as the result of the incapacity of the "backward Soviets" and their planned economy, which had built an unsafe type of reactor. Federal chancellor Merkel remarked in her March 17 statement that the situation had changed because "the seemingly impossible had become possible in such a highly developed country as Japan."

Basically the imperialist powers believed their own fairy tale that Western reactors were much safer and that something of this sort was impossible in the highly developed nuclear power plants of the West. At the time of Chernobyl, they deliberately overlooked the fact that this was not the first major accident in a nuclear power plant. On 28 March 1979 there was a partial core meltdown in a "highly developed country," the U.S., at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Whereas opponents of nuclear power let the March 28 anniversary pass by, major mobilizations are being planned for the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl reactor disaster.

After Fukushima, Iouli Andreev, who was for years responsible for the decontamination work around the stricken Chernobyl reactor, made the obvious point that nuclear plant operators have intentionally ignored the lessons from Chernobyl in their hunt for profits and that the government encouraged them. In "Ten Years of Chernobyl," he wrote:

> "Both 'Western' and 'Eastern' [Soviet] reactor technology demonstrate strengths and weaknesses: The strength of the Eastern technology lies in the fact that both material-intensive construction and highly trained staff were inexpensive. The result is robust technical facilities with a low degree of automation. This must be viewed positively, as highly trained people are always preferable to robots, as exemplified in air travel, where even today planes are still being flown by pilots. Lack of quality control must be seen as the weak side of Eastern technology. Compared to this, Western reactor technology has developed under the limiting framework of economic competition, with high costs for both personnel and technical components. The result is less robust facilities with a higher degree of automation and fewer skilled personnel."

But lack of quality control was the direct expression of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet regime. Only a regime of workers democracy can ensure the necessary safety and work morale. The reaction to the catastrophe testified both to the possibilities of a planned economy and also to its bureaucratic deformation. Over 600,000 engineers, scientists and soldiers were marshaled to deal with the radioactive pollution around the sealed reactor. But Andreev is probably right that the large number of deaths could have been avoided had the other three reactor blocks at the facility not been restarted and if technically well-prepared cleanup work had been carried out after more time had passed.

One of the arguments of Western "experts" was always that reactors like Chernobyl had no secondary reactor safety vessel. But New York physicist Michio Kaku remarked in a talk on Chernobyl (reprinted in *WV* No. 405, 6 June 1986): "Well, the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant in Long Island has a containment structure which is weaker than the containment structure at Chernobyl. The reactor there has a containment—not the four-foot concrete dome characteristic in U.S. plants, it has a structure which can contain 57 pounds per square inch overpressure." The Long Island reactor, he said, could withstand only 30 pounds.

So-called third-generation reactors have been in operation since the 1990s in Japan. In contrast to second-generation reactors like that in Fukushima and most other commercial nuclear power plants, they depend on so-called passive safety devices based on physical principles (gravity, convection, resistance to high temperatures), not on technological safety controls that depend on electrical power or operator intervention to avoid a catastrophe in the event of a malfunction. They possess, for example, the capability of a controlled burn-off of accumulated hydrogen, thereby averting explosions like those in Fukushima. Additionally, in the light of the rescue operations after Chernobyl, so-called core-catchers were developed that, in the event of a core meltdown, catch the hot material and cool it down. In Chernobyl, such a core-catcher was constructed beneath the devastated reactor using an underground tunnel. Fortunately, it proved unnecessary.

As of now, there exists only a single nuclear power plant equipped with such a core-catcher, and it is in China. China is now being subjected to an anti-Communist attack for having decided to massively expand its nuclear capacity in mid March as part of its five-year plan; at the same time, it is disparaged as the world's largest producer of carbon dioxide.

In the case of China, and previously the Soviet Union and East Germany (DDR), the Greens' and the environmentalists' anti-Communism and hostility to large industry and centralism come together on the basis of their glorification of bourgeois democracy. Every five-year plan that expanded these countries' industrial capacity filled these types with horror. This is why they cooperated in fueling the Chernobyl hysteria in 1986. Following German reunification, as a spearhead of the witchhunt against the Stasi [secret service], the Greens assisted in the smashing of DDR industry by the Treuhand [privatization agency]. This led to massive unemployment in East Germany and the emigration of over a million people.

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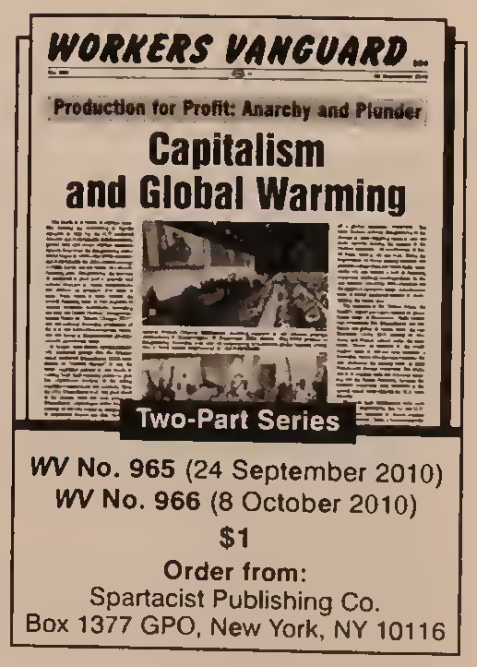


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# MUNI...

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It wasn't just the business unionists but so-called militants like Bridges, who had boasted that he "came in during a general strike, and it looks like I may be going out with one," who were responsible for this defeat.

The 1934 San Francisco general strike which led to the founding of the ILWU three years later, established the city as the most militant "labor town" in the country. But this began to change with the introduction of containerized shipping. Longshore work overwhelmingly moved to the Port of Oakland, which had the storage space and rail terminal for transshipping. As blue-collar jobs moved out, corporate, real estate and financial ventures drew in a stream of largely white petty-bourgeois professionals. Working-class families who had once populated entire city neighborhoods could no longer afford to live in San Francisco. The black population had already been devastated by "urban renewal" beginning in the 1950s. Today, black people are less than 6 percent of the city's population, half of them living in increasingly decrepit public housing.

The MUNI drivers union, with its demonstrated power, is crucial not only to a fight by all city workers unions but also to the defense of the besieged ghetto and immigrant populations. Reflecting the anger and combativity of the ranks, a series of union oppositions have appeared in TWU Local 250-A over the years.

WV Photo

**Pickets at San Francisco MUNI transit barn during 1976 strike. MUNI workers stayed out for over a month in solidarity with striking city craft workers.**

In this round, a statement announcing a meeting of the "Strike Education Committee" of TWU Local 250-A rightly called for a "no" vote and for strike action against the slave-labor contract. After the ranks voted it down, a subsequent statement by these oppositionists offered its own solution to the budget deficit, arguing for "the proper collection and expansion of the Transit Impact Development Fee" from corporations and real estate developers.

The banks, corporations and other capitalist enterprises are sitting on mountains of cash, the ill-gotten gains of a system based on the exploitation of labor for the profits of the few. But the workers aren't going to get their hands on this money by appealing to a government whose purpose is to defend and increase the profitability of American capitalism. Rather than preparing the workers for struggle against the capitalist class and its state, the promotion of such illusions, which are amply peddled by the trade-union bureaucracy, has prostrated the unions in the face of the one-sided class war against them.

To wage the battles necessary for their own defense and in the interests of all the oppressed, the unions must be mobilized in opposition to the capitalist state and its political parties—Democrats and Republicans alike. This requires a new leadership, not some "militant" talkers but leaders rooted in the elementary understanding that the workers have no interests in common with their exploiters. We need to build a workers party whose aim is the revolutionary overturn of the capitalist system, and the racial oppression that is built into it, and the establishment of a workers government, where those who labor rule.■

# Canada...

*(continued from page 3)*

more and more temporary, contract and casual workers with poor benefits and job security, while thousands of non-union, low-wage workers now staff postal franchises across the country. What was once an enviable job among public sector unionists is now synonymous with low wages and brutal rates of injury. Strained joints from grinding repetition on the shop floor, phone calls at home from harassing supervisors and insurance companies, poverty, hip replacements—that is the lot of workers at the "Modern Post."

One consequence of trying to appease the bosses was starkly demonstrated in the fall 2008 strike of 2,100 members of the Union of Postal Communications Employees (UPCE), who are mainly office and technical workers. The leaderships of both postal unions signed a rotten scabbing pact that ordered CUPW members to work behind UPCE picket lines. Isolated, the strike went down in defeat and management succeeded in shafting the UPCE with the same kind of short-term disability plan that it threatens CUPW with today. In the past, there were many instances of solidarity—including workers refusing to scab on one another's strikes—between CUPW members and those in the former Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC), which merged with CUPW in 1989. However, mutual scabbing deals have more and more become the norm, contributing to an erosion of the workers' consciousness.

Today, the CUPW leadership offers advice on how "another post office is possible," including mooting "partnerships" with private banks ("The Future of Canada Post," October 2010). But the bosses of this crown corporation care only about the bottom line, and no amount of "responsible" business advice from the union leadership can change that. Playing by the bosses' rules will only bring defeat.

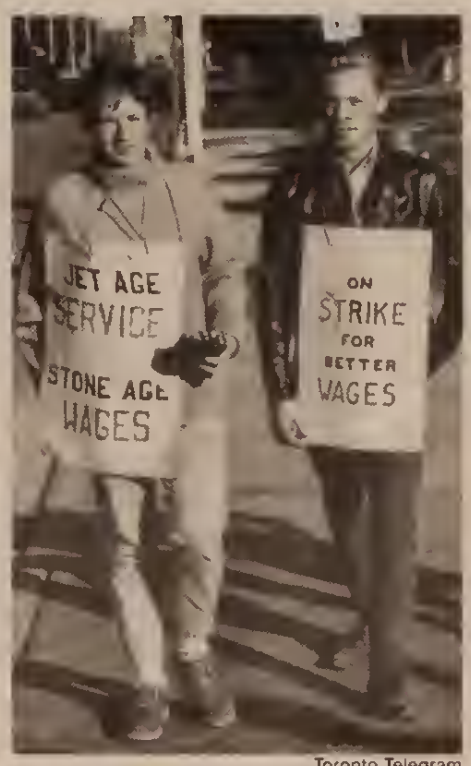
## The Legacy of 1965

Beating back the assault on CUPW will require a mobilization of labour's social power. The very right to form a union was once illegal. Labour's victories were wrested from the capitalists by defying bourgeois "law and order" and using the methods of the class struggle: strikes, mass picket lines, factory occupations and hot-cargoing (refusing to handle) struck goods. Hard-fought strikes can galvanize the rest of the labour movement and, when victorious, tear up the bosses' anti-strike laws and injunctions.

That is what happened in the "illegal" postal strike of 1965. Just as the auto strikes of the late 1930s and 40s and the Stelco steel strike of 1946 were crucial to forging strong industrial unions in Canada, the 1965 postal strike was key in winning public sector workers the right to strike and form unions. Previously, a government job meant low pay and arbitrary work rules. Paternalism and patronage were rampant and unions were proscribed. As Quebec premier Jean Lesage put it in 1964, "the Queen does not negotiate with her subjects."

By 1965, postal workers in Montreal had had enough. They formed rank-and-file strike committees in defiance of their housebroken "professional association," and picket lines soon spread to post offices across the country. In the face of threatened government injunctions and mass firings, the pickets held firm. After more than two weeks, the government was forced to concede wage increases and rewrite some of its labour laws. CUPW and LCUC were formed soon after. In 1967 the government enacted the Public Service Staff Relations Act, and in spite of its severe restrictions some 260,000 government workers won the right to unionize and strike.

It was not accidental that the 1965 postal strike began in Quebec, where opposition to national oppression was fueling an increase in class struggle. Instead of solidarity, the struggles of Québécois workers in this period often met with chauvinism from the NDP and the Canadian Labour Congress misleaders. This in turn pushed Québécois workers into the arms of their own class enemies, represented by the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois. We advocate independence for Quebec in order to fight Anglo chauvinism and lay the basis for making clear to the workers of both English Canada and Quebec that their enemies are their own respective capitalists, not each other.




Toronto Telegram

**Striking Ontario postal workers, 1968.**

## For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

Any serious struggle by the working class must confront the fact that the Canadian state is the bosses' state. It is not neutral. Consisting at its core of the cops, courts, army and prisons, the capitalist state enforces the rule of private property and the deepening misery of the workers. State repression has been repeatedly wielded against the postal unions. Over the decades there has been one strikebreaking injunction after another. Cops have busted up picket lines and raided union offices. CUPW was targeted and disrupted by the CSIS secret police. In 1980 CUPW president Jean-Claude Parrot spent two months in prison for defying the anti-labour government of Pierre Trudeau. Over a decade later the Ontario NDP government of Bob Rae jailed the president of CUPW's Toronto local, Andre Kolompar, and other union members for defending their picket lines during a 1991 postal strike.

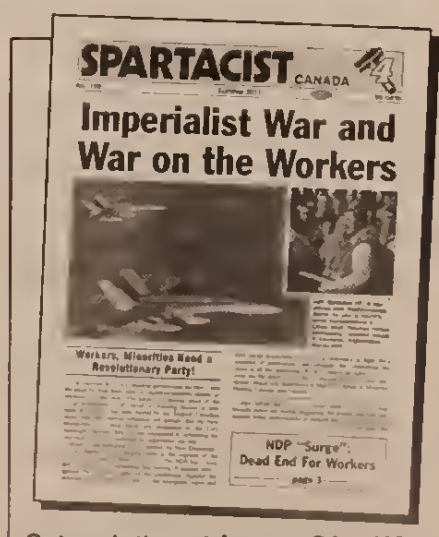
With the proliferation of electronic communication and private couriers, CUPW faces an objectively more difficult situation today than in the days when Canada Post had a virtual monopoly of mail distribution. However, a powerful country-wide postal strike that chokes off the flow of mail would still have a major impact from coast to coast. It could not only win the demands postal workers need, but could also inspire the rest of the labour movement to take on the capitalist offensive. A class-struggle strike leadership would appeal in the first instance for active solidarity from the UPCE workers and the Teamster-organized Purolator couriers. Organize the non-union postal franchises! Picket lines mean don't cross! A joint struggle against the postal bosses would also lay the basis for the merger of all postal workers into one industrial union.

The fight against growing unemployment and impoverishment poses sharply the demand for full employment through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. Under capitalism, technological advances such as those wielded by Canada Post are always used to beef up profits through speed-up and job cuts. In a rational society, such advances would be put in the service of the working people. But that requires a struggle to sweep away the supremely irrational capitalist system, replacing it with a society where those who labour rule.

As the revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in the founding program of the Fourth International, the Transitional Program (1938), "Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the slops of a crumbling society. ***The right to employment*** is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation." He continued:

> "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."

It is in the interests of the entire working class that CUPW beat back the bosses' onslaught. If the union movement is to wage the battles necessary for defense of the workers and all the oppressed, a political struggle is necessary to get rid of the sellouts atop the labour movement who strangle the workers' fighting spirit. It is in the crucible of the class struggle that a new leadership of the unions can be forged. This is not simply a question of militancy but of political program. What is needed is a leadership that will arm the workers with an understanding both of their social power and their historic interests to free humanity from the exploitation, all-sided misery and war inherent to a system based on production for profit. Forging such a leadership is in turn an integral part of the fight for a multiracial, binational revolutionary workers party whose aim is no less than doing away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution.■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Reuters

**Left: Germany's Merkel and France's Sarkozy lay out draconian bailout conditions to Greek prime minister Papandreou, February 4. Right: With virulent nationalism rising, June 12 protest by "Indignados" in Athens' Syntagma Square is awash in Greek flags.**

# Greece...

*(continued from page 1)*

there is a huge disparity between the objective needs of the Greek working class and oppressed on one side and the political program of their leadership on the other. The repeated strikes and protests are designed to dissipate the anger of workers, whose militancy is clearly not the issue. The problem is that the working class is hamstrung by a leadership that accepts the need for the working class to bear some degree of austerity to "bail out" capitalism, while objecting that the terms and conditions dictated by the IMF and the European Central Bank (ECB) are too severe.

The program of the labor bureaucracy —defined by what is "practical" under capitalism—has led to disaster for the working class. To overcome the gulf between the workers' present consciousness and the necessity for a workers government based on organs of proletarian power, a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party would put forward a series of transitional demands, starting from the felt needs of the masses and pointing the way toward the seizure of state power by the working class and the expropriation of the rapacious capitalist class.

To combat mass unemployment, it is necessary to demand the sharing of available work, with no loss of pay, and a massive program of public works. To protect even their current living standards—already among the lowest in Europe—workers must demand that wages be indexed to inflation. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the industrialists and bankers, workers should demand that the capitalists open their (real) books. With the imperialists demanding the dismantling of state enterprises, the proletariat must fight for the expropriation of the productive property of the capitalist class as a whole and the establishment of a planned economy under workers rule, where production would be based on social need, not profit.

### Combat National Chauvinism!

Throughout Europe, the capitalist press and politicians have been whipping up a chauvinist frenzy against Greeks, who are portrayed as lazy, ungrateful scroungers. Last year the right-wing German *Bild* (27 October 2010) screamed: "Sell your islands, you bankrupt Greeks...and the Acropolis too!" A recent London *Financial Times* (9 May) editorial demanded: "Athens must be put under the gun." For all the talk of bailing out Greece, the only "bailout" that is taking place is that of Europe's banks. Columnist Martin Wolf noted in the *Financial Times* (21 June): "It is far less embarrassing to state that one is helping Greece when one is in fact helping one's own banks."

With chauvinist arrogance, the European imperialists, led by Germany, are seeking to impose on Greece, an EU member state, the kind of diktat they are accustomed to issuing to neocolonial countries in the Third World. The *Financial Times* (17 June) reports that officials of the "troika"—the IMF, European Central Bank and European Commission—are demanding that "outsiders" be brought in "to make Greece's privatization program happen," adding that "because Greece seemed incapable of collecting taxes, international experts would come in to do that, too." The article further reports that Finnish officials were insisting that "Athens assets should be securitised so they could be used as collateral. If Greece defaulted, lenders would gain an airport or some other utility."

The imperialists' dismissive attitude to Greece's sovereignty has in turn fueled national chauvinism in Greece. Right-wing opponents of the EU/IMF's bailout include New Democracy, Greece's main opposition party. ND represents Greek business interests that have no intention of paying the imperialists' extortion themselves and fear, as BBC economics editor Paul Mason put it, "a tax bill the like of which they have never dreamed, nor indeed paid." However, ND and PASOK are united in the determination that Greek working people pay for the country's economic crisis.

Recent months have seen the explosive growth of a new movement, the so-called "indignant citizens" movement. The "Indignados" placed themselves at the head of the mass mobilizations outside parliament, where Greek flags proliferated, the Greek national anthem was sung and anti-American and anti-German sentiment was rife. Protesters have waved EU flags with a swastika at the center—equating "German" with "Nazi" and invoking the spectre of World War II, when Greece was occupied by German imperialism (followed by rampaging British troops).

In Spain, the Indignados movement arose in response to the austerity measures that were being enforced by the social-democratic Spanish Socialist Party government before its huge defeat in the last elections. In Greece, the petty-bourgeois Indignados emerged in the context of the abject failure of the trade-union bureaucracy to present any way forward for the struggles of the working masses. The two main trade-union federations, the GSEE and ADEDY, representing the private and public sectors respectively, are controlled by PASOK, which is imposing the austerity measures. Despite the "socialist" reference in its name, and the credentials given to it by opportunist left groups, PASOK is a capitalist party.

Broad layers of the middle class that could be rallied behind an insurgent proletariat struggling for power are instead being drawn into virulently chauvinist, anti-immigrant and anti-working-class movements. Displaying overt hostility to the organizations of the working class and the left, the Indignados present themselves as a "pro-democracy" movement of all classes. As in Spain, all leftist political parties and trade unions, as well as red flags and banners, were banned from the Greek protests at first. Not surprisingly, given the nationalist fervor whipped up by the Indignados, Golden Dawn and other fascist outfits have been seen at the protests.

There has been an ominous rise in racist attacks, as desperately impoverished immigrants are used as scapegoats for the economic devastation. Earlier this year, fascist thugs rampaged through a heavily immigrant area of Athens, killing one person and wounding many more. Golden Dawn got over 5 percent of the vote in municipal elections in Athens late last year. According to the London-based Institute of Race Relations, Golden Dawn's Nikos Michaloliakos, accompanied by eight apparently armed bodyguards, gave a Nazi salute at a council meeting in Athens in January.

The fascists are emboldened by the racist policies of the government. Greece's border with Turkey is one of the front lines of "Fortress Europe," with EU border patrols employed to keep immigrants out. The Greek government has announced plans to build a razor-wire fence, equipped with sonar systems and thermal sensors, along the border. The workers movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and to unionize foreign workers. ***For union/minority mobilizations to stop fascist provocations! For integrated workers defense guards to protect immigrant neighborhoods!***

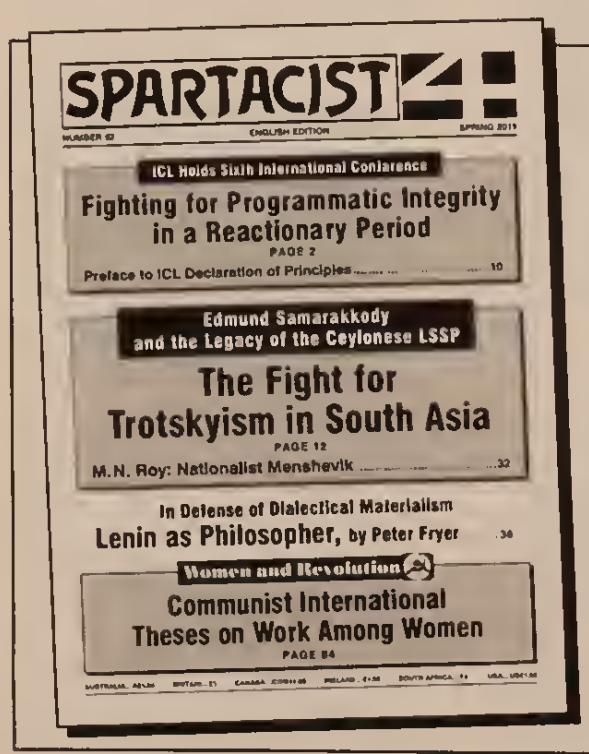
### Communist Party: Left Face of Greek Nationalism

The Stalinist KKE adopts a posture of militant opposition to the PASOK government and promotes PAME as a class-struggle alternative to what it calls the "government- and employer-led" trade unions. But the Greek Stalinists present no fundamental alternative to the betrayals of the GSEE/ADEDY union misleaders. Despite its occasional verbal radicalism, the KKE is hostile to the program of workers revolution to overthrow Greek capitalism.

The KKE's political bankruptcy is evident in regard to the Indignados. In an article in *Rizospastis* (5 June), the KKE correctly noted that "the 'anonymous' leaders of the 'movement of the squares,' the 'non-partisan,' 'spontaneous,' 'non-politicized' citizens, appear to be politicized, declaring themselves 'anti-left'." The article adds that with their slogans "Out with the left," "Parties out" and "Trade unions out," the Indignados are "not that democratic, or, to be more accu-

Bettmann photos

**Left: July-August 1945 Potsdam Conference with Churchill, Truman and Stalin, who agreed to preserve capitalist rule in postwar West Europe. Right: Communist-led anti-Nazi partisans in Piraeus, December 1944. Greek Stalinists went on to disarm workers, enter capitalist government.**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# Germany...

*(continued from page 8)*

Now they're in the vanguard in the anti-Communist witchhunting of China.

### The Question of Final Storage

A further prevalent argument against nuclear power plants is the question of nuclear waste and its final disposal. In this question of ultimate storage, profit and irrationality distort what is basically a geological/technical question. Such distrust of capitalist governments and companies is rightly indicated by the more than 40-year-old "trial repository" in the former salt mine Asse II near Wolfenbüttel in Lower Saxony. Following a report in the *Braunschweiger Zeitung* (11 June 2008) of brine contaminated with radioactivity in Asse, a status report by the then-Federal environmental minister Sigmar Gabriel (SPD) revealed that it had been known, even before the first nuclear waste was deposited in the former mine, that it was not watertight. Nonetheless, from 1967 to 1978 126,000 barrels were deposited, some of them damaged in loading and others rusted through. Since at least 1988, water has been gushing into the mineshafts, and since about 1994 radioactive brine has been collecting there, which ultimately the facility's operator secretly pumped out underground. There is a threat of collapse, and no one can say whether some of this brine might at some time reach the outside.

This has fueled ongoing protests since plans were revealed in 1977 for a new final repository in Gorlehen in Lower Saxony. Since 1995 there have been regular protests against the Castor [casks of radioactive material] transports from the French spent fuel treatment plant La Hague to the temporary Gorleben repository, whose suitability as a final repository is still being investigated. As many as 30,000 police were mobilized to escort the transports and bludgeon nuclear power opponents and residents of neighboring localities who had blocked the way in protest. The workers movement must, of course, defend the protesters against state terror. But even a planned economy would in all probability require ultimate storage facilities, if only to store already existing wastes. These could, however, in the absence of corruption and the demand for profitability, be set up in a way that took into account the interests and opinions of the local population.

In Germany, compared to the 123,000 cubic meters of radioactive nuclear waste generated so far, 500,000 cubic meters of toxic chemical waste are produced *per year*, which has to be deposited in final repositories. In contrast to radioactive waste, the potential danger of toxic chemical waste does not decrease with time. Whether or not it's radioactive, the capitalists don't give a damn what happens to their waste.

ddp

**Former salt mine Asse II in Lower Saxony is used as "trial repository" for 126,000 canisters of nuclear waste despite government's knowledge of corrosive water seepage.**

Opponents of nuclear power cite Greenpeace to the effect that there's only enough uranium for 60 years of production. But even if this were true, using fast breeder reactors it is possible to split uranium 238, the majority of which is now being discarded unused. Thorium, which exists in much larger deposits than uranium, could be employed for the production of nuclear energy. Fast breeders also produce noticeably less nuclear waste than second- and third-generation reactors. Finally, the technological realization of nuclear fusion, such as occurs in the sun, is also being researched. Fusion holds the promise of an abundant source of power whose by-product is helium, a harmless noble gas.

Nuclear energy—whether generated by fission or fusion—has, alongside its very real risks, a gigantic potential for propelling forward the development of humankind, and thereby its social liberation. But for this the rule of capitalism must be overthrown and a socialist society established. We fight for the construction of a revolutionary multiethnic workers party as part of a reforged Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. ■

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rate, they are undemocratic." What the KKE cannot challenge, though, is the virulent nationalism of the Indignados, which the KKE itself shares.

Indeed, the KKE has made defense of "national sovereignty" its own calling card, and is particularly virulent in espousing Greek nationalism in relation to Turkey, the traditional enemy of its "own" bourgeoisie. For example, in a speech last year, KKE general secretary Aleka Papariga complained that the EU was not taking account of "our national sovereignty rights" when considering Turkey's bid for membership. She went on to chastise Papandreou for "trying to cover up the issue by dividing the Aegean, something that will have an adverse effect on the islands' defense." Nationalism within the workers movement is the chief obstacle to constructing a genuine revolutionary workers party in Greece.

It is a travesty that the KKE retains a reputation as militant fighters against capitalism based on the Resistance against the Nazi occupation and the subsequent Greek Civil War of 1946-49. In pursuit of its program of class collaboration with the Greek bourgeoisie, the KKE handed power back to the bourgeoisie following World War II. The working class, backed by the peasantry, was the decisive force in the anti-Nazi Resistance, mounting massive strikes and demonstrations from late 1942 until the withdrawal of German troops in 1944. The working class, arms in hand, had state power in its grasp. But its leaders, the treacherous KKE, actually welcomed the arrival of British troops into Greece, enabling the imperialists to stabilize the situation, bring back the hated monarchy and massacre the workers.

The Greek Stalinists lived up to the terms of the secret Tehran agreement, whereby Stalin granted the imperialists the "right" to preserve capitalist rule in West Europe and Greece. Politically disarming the proletariat, the Stalinists went so far as to join a "national" government of the bourgeoisie. In February 1945, they signed the Varkiza agreement, which physically disarmed the KKE-led Resistance forces as British troops and the Greek National Guard were preparing to unleash a full-scale wave of terror against the masses. Only in February 1946 did the KKE finally abandon its suicidal policy and take up the "armed struggle" again. In October 1949, after ferocious repression, the Civil War was ended. The KKE ranks had fought heroically. But needless to say, the KKE learned nothing from the tragic consequences of its treachery and continues to pursue its bankrupt program of subordination to the Greek bourgeoisie.

What the Trotskyists wrote at the end of World War II holds true for the role of the Stalinists throughout the Civil War:

> "The Greek masses were burning with revolutionary determination and wished to prepare the overthrow of all their oppressors—Nazi and Greek. Instead of providing the mass movement with a revolutionary program, similar to the Bolshevik program of 1917, and preparing the masses for the seizure of power, the Stalinists steered the movement into the blind alley of People's Frontism. The Stalinists, who enjoyed virtual hegemony of the mass movement, joined with a lot of petty bourgeois politicians, lawyers, professors, who had neither mass following nor influence, and artificially worked to limit the struggle to the fight for capitalist democracy."
>
> —"Civil War in Greece," *Fourth International*, February 1945

The social-democratic reformists in Greece—such as the Socialist Workers Party (SEK), which is affiliated to the British group of the same name, and Xekinima, the Greek affiliate of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI)—stand to the right of the KKE in their enthusiasm for the anti-Communist, anti-working-class Indignados. For example, Xekinima calls to "Extend the movement to all work places, workers' neighbourhoods, and the youth" (socialistworld.net, 27 June). The notion of classless "democracy" that these groups promote has long been an anti-Communist code word that actually means support to bourgeois class rule. Thus, both the SEK and Xekinima supported capitalist restoration in the former Soviet Union in 1991-92 and hailed counterrevolutionary forces such as Polish Solidarność and Boris Yeltsin's Russian "democrats."

### For Workers Revolution!

The Trotskyist Group of Greece fights to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party capable of leading the working class to power. Above all, this means breaking the workers from nationalism and winning them to a revolutionary internationalist perspective. During Round One of the present crisis, the TGG issued a 28 April 2010 leaflet that opposed the widespread Greek nationalism as "poisonous to class consciousness." Any effective struggle against the bosses' attacks must begin with the understanding that the workers have no country, until they seize the one they're in. Our comrades insisted: "What is needed is international workers solidarity across the EU against capital" (see "Down With PASOK Government's 'Stability Program'!" *WV* No. 959, 21 May 2010).

The Greek financial crisis has increased the seething national antagonisms in Europe, as seen in the diplomatic spats between France and Germany. German chancellor Angela Merkel, unpopular at home and with a shrinking majority in the Bundestag (parliament), has clashed with French officials and with the ECB over whether the bankers have to accept some losses. Following pressure from the IMF, Merkel agreed to a new bailout package while the French banks have offered to roll over Greek debts for 30 years. Whatever divisions there may be within bourgeois circles over how to deal with the catastrophic financial situation, in Germany, France, Britain and Europe as a whole, each government is determined to make the working masses pay for a crisis that is caused by the capitalist system itself.

The EU is an imperialist trade bloc, centered on a pact between the French and German capitalist rulers to ratchet up the exploitation of the working classes at home while trying to gain advantage over their imperialist rivals as well as the smaller European states. At the same time, the EU is an unstable formation that intensifies national antagonisms and fuels chauvinism.

We Marxists oppose the EU from the perspective of proletarian internationalism. The comrades of our German section, the Spartakist Workers Party, last year published an article titled "Solidarity with the Greek Workers! For Class Struggle Against the German Capitalists!" (*Spartakist* No. 183, May 2010), which noted:

> "The chauvinist campaign against Greece is being set in motion so as to prevent the German working class from hitting on the idea of placing blame for the crisis at the feet of the capitalist system and its own rulers. The workers movement in Germany must mobilize in solidarity with Greek workers and all the other victims of the EU imperialists—after all, they'll be confronted with similar attacks in the immediate future. The witchhunt against Greece also serves to split and weaken the multiethnic working class in Germany."

Today, despite the relentless bleeding of the Greek working people, the country remains mired in deep recession. The bankrupt capitalist class manifestly does not have any crumbs that it is willing to throw to dampen workers' anger. Short of a struggle for working-class power, the workers' struggles will continue to be frustrated. The perspective for Greek workers must be that of common class struggle with their class brothers and sisters—from Turkey to Germany and elsewhere around the world.

As the TGG wrote in its leaflet: "***What's needed is a socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a workers state that will lay the basis for building a socialist society.*** For that, you need to build a revolutionary workers party—a party like Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks—which will fight for a workers government. The TGG, Greek sympathizing section of the ICL, seeks to build such a party" (our emphasis). ■


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WORKERS VANGUARD

# Defiant S.F. MUNI Workers Betrayed by TWU Misleaders

## Arbitrator Enforces Union Busting Contract

Three times in the last year and a half, the ranks of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 250-A, whose more than 2,000 members drive the buses at San Francisco's MUNI transit agency, defiantly voted down giveback deals negotiated by their union misleaders. Enraged that these workers, who are heavily black and include many women, refused to sacrifice jobs, wages and working conditions to bail out the city budget, a cabal of high-rolling corporate interests and Democratic Party politicians cooked up an electoral initiative, Proposition G, aimed at forcing their dictates on the union.

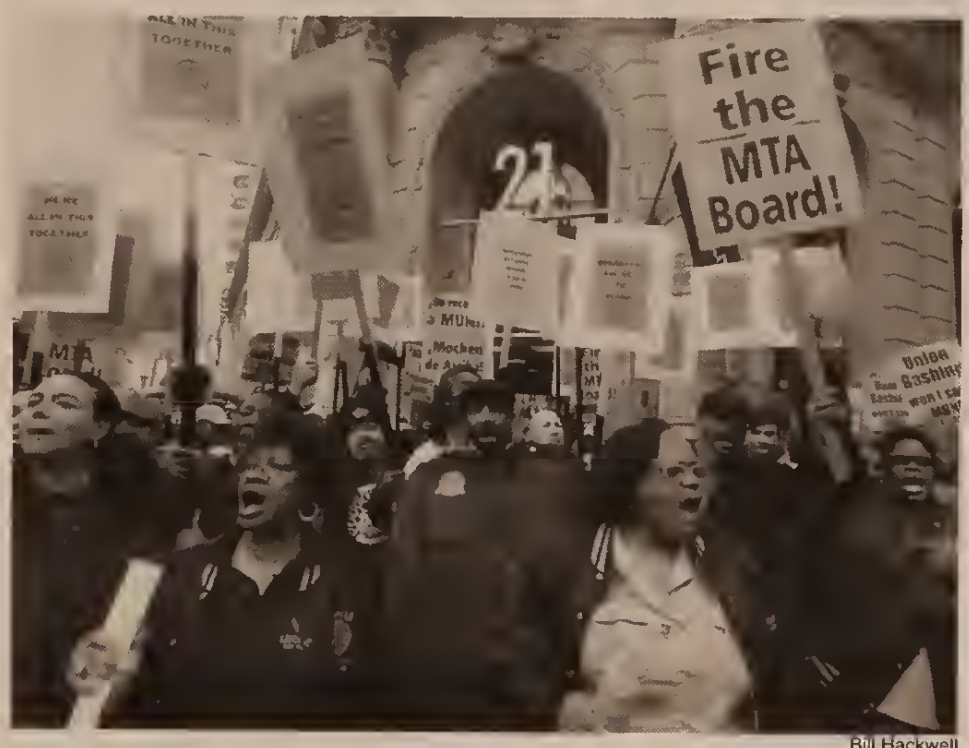
Passed in November 2010, the proposition eliminated a City Charter provision guaranteeing that MUNI drivers' wages be set as the second highest in the country (a provision which itself had been enacted to preserve "labor peace"). But Prop. G's real aim was to enforce the unchallenged domination of the MUNI bosses, including by mandating that any contract dispute be settled by binding arbitration. On July 1, a contract that the membership had voted down over two-to-one in early June was imposed by an arbitrator. Under its conditions, wages will be frozen for three years. Full-time jobs will be cut, with up to 8,000 hours of work per week assigned to part-time workers. Such say as the union had in regard to working conditions, scheduling and health and safety is gutted.

Drivers are already pushed beyond endurance, forced to scramble to meet impossible schedules, often with no breaks, and disciplined even for being ahead of schedule. Seventy percent of the equipment they operate has been cited for safety violations. Now, the enforced contract gives management a total whip hand to discipline and fire drivers. Investigations of accidents will be reduced to kangaroo-court proceedings run by the bosses, while the right to grieve their rulings is virtually obliterated. In short, the contract is a declaration of open season against the drivers by a management determined to get rid of anyone who doesn't bow to its command.

In the first part of this year, physical assaults on drivers, a regular occurrence, increased, fueled by an orchestrated union-hating media barrage. "Greedy" MUNI workers were blamed for skyrocketing fares and service cuts by the capitalists' hired pens, who wept crocodile tears for the plight of the poor, the aged and the disabled. Indeed, those most in need of public transportation have suffered, at the hands not of drivers but of the same forces going after the union in the name of "balancing the budget" of the capitalist state on the backs of the working people and poor.

In the face of an economic crisis brought on by the banks and corporate magnates, across the country Democrats and Republicans alike have been whipping up an outcry against public workers unions. Having bilked the public purse of billions for the "recovery" of their profits, the rulers cry that public workers are living high off the hog at taxpayers' expense. MUNI drivers have long been on the receiving end of the class hatred and racist contempt of the petty-bourgeois professionals employed in the city's financial, commercial and high-tech enterprises. These yuppies, many of whose stock options doubtless took a bath in the market crash, are enraged that MUNI workers, whom they despise as menials, continue to make anything approximating a decent wage.

Unionized city jobs, at MUNI in particular, are among the few that black people can get which pay relatively decent wages. The TWU's ranks also include Asians and increasing numbers of Latinos. The union's composition provides a vital link to the majority of MUNI riders, who are working people, heavily Latinos, Asians and blacks. To bring these forces into a fight on the side of the union, the TWU must take up the demand for free mass transit for all. With services being slashed for everyone other than the downtown business sector, the union would find plenty of allies if it fought to put more buses on the streets and expand transit service—not at the price of piling more work on the already beleaguered workforce, but by fighting to open more jobs for full-time drivers at full union pay and benefits. But to wage such a struggle means a leadership that will take on the bosses and their political parties, not bow before them to help bail the capitalist masters out of the economic disaster created by their profit system.




Bill Hackwell

**MUNI workers at March 2010 rally in downtown San Francisco to protest threatened budget cuts, layoffs.**

### The "Partnership" of Labor and Capital Is a Lie!

The contract imposed on MUNI workers is a savage indictment of the trade-union bureaucracy, which promotes deadly illusions in the "neutrality" of the capitalist state, an apparatus of repression directed *against* the working class. It also provides a stark snapshot of the role the union tops play as labor lieutenants of the capitalist rulers in enforcing class peace. At a press conference of angry MUNI workers in June, one rightly denounced the TWU leadership for having "sided with the city against us." But the TWU tops hardly stood alone on this one.

An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (9 June) condemning TWU Local 250-A as "the only public employees union in San Francisco that has spurned the city's requests for givebacks, wage freezes and other measures to help close gaping budget deficits" positively cited S.F. Labor Council head Tim Paulson boasting, "I am mightily proud of every union in San Francisco that has engaged in that effort." Paulson went on to moan that the MUNI drivers had not supported their leadership in its similar endeavors.

The "effort" Paulson was referring to is a deal cut by leaders of most city workers unions agreeing to a ballot initiative that would make their members shell out millions in pension and health care payments. In a May 30 message on his blog, Paulson promoted this deal as proof of the benefits of the bureaucrats' partnership with the bosses and their Democratic Party representatives:

> "While governors and mayors in Wisconsin, San Jose, New Jersey, Costa Mesa, and Ohio, unilaterally decide to demonize the workers who maintain our streets, clinics, firehouses and public safety—here in San Francisco the entire fabric of government, unions, and business found a way to craft a solution to the financial hole we have found ourselves in because of the very avoidable missteps on Wall Street."

The city of San Francisco has long been a stage for the playing out of one of the great shell games of American capitalist rule, the notion that the Democratic Party is the "friend" of working people. If the Democrats may not openly "demonize" workers, it's because they don't need to. Unlike the Republicans, who revel in union-busting, the Democrats rely on the able assistance of their allies in the trade-union bureaucracy, who are themselves major players in the party, to peddle the snake oil of "shared sacrifice" in order to savage hard-won union gains.

The same game is being played by Oakland's Democratic mayor Jean Quan, who recently negotiated a 9 percent cut in wages and benefits with the leaders of that city's public unions. Contrasting her administration to that of Wisconsin governor Scott Walker, whose legislation stripped collective bargaining rights from public workers, Quan had earlier declared: "We will have layoffs but they will come as part of collective bargaining."

The vendetta against the MUNI drivers, waged by successive Democratic Party administrations, goes back to the mass labor actions by S.F. city workers in defense of their unions in the 1970s. In 1974, a strike that began with SEIU city workers spread to hospitals and closed the city sewage treatment plant. At the height of these strike actions, MUNI, AC Transit and BART workers shut down all public transit in and to the city. U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, who at the time was head of the S.F. Board of Supervisors, responded with a ballot proposition aimed at banning all strikes by city workers.

In 1976, MUNI workers again shut down the buses for over a month in solidarity with a strike by city craft workers. These actions led to the brink of a city-wide general strike, which was betrayed by the city's union tops. In the aftermath, the Democratic Party administration under Mayor George Moscone, a much-adulated "progressive," unleashed a barrage of anti-union propositions. The business forces backing and bankrolling these initiatives, from the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association to the Committee on Jobs, have been at it ever since. Most recently, they were among those funding the 2010 referendum targeting TWU Local 250-A.

### Fight for a Class-Struggle Leadership!

The 1974-76 strikes showed both the power of labor and the treachery of the union bureaucracy. From the city unions to MUNI drivers to longshore, workers understood that their strength lay in their numbers, solidarity and collective organization. Their determination and militancy was such that the Central Labor Council voted to prepare for a general strike. Militants in International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, who were supported by *Workers Vanguard*, put forward a motion calling on the union to join the city workers picket lines. Their motion called to make good on ILWU president Harry Bridges' pledge of support to city workers by shutting down all port operations and demanded an emergency mass meeting of all city labor to launch an immediate general strike. But this motion was sabotaged hy the Local leadership.

The Moscone administration called the hureaucrats' bluff and they folded, preferring defeat to unleashing the unions in an all-out battle against the city's rulers.

*continued on page 9*

WORKERS VANGUARD 50¢

No. 984 5 August 2011

# Hunger Strike in California Prison Hell

AP

Pelican Bay "supermax" prison, scene of desperate hunger strike protesting inhuman conditions.

JULY 29—For three weeks, inmates locked in the solitary concrete isolation chambers of the Security Housing Unit (SHU) at California's notorious Pelican Bay "supermax" prison starved themselves simply in order to be accorded some vestige of humanity from their jailers. At its height, the hunger strike, which began on July 1, was joined by 6,600 inmates at 13 other prisons in the state. The prisoners' demands—for an end to group punishment and enforced "snitching"; for access to educational and other programs; to be allowed human contact, weekly phone calls, access to sunlight and nutritional food—were strikingly minimal. This fact is itself testament to the dehumanizing torture of solitary confinement.

As Pennsylvania death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal put it in a solidarity statement, "These men are killing themselves potentially for fresh air and sunlight." SHU prisoners are locked in windowless concrete cells for 22 and a half hours a day under the incessant glare of fluorescent lights and behind solid metal doors that do not even allow eye contact with fellow inmates. The only "reprieve" is a possible 90 minutes a day in a 26-by-10-foot recreation yard surrounded by 20-foot-high walls. As an oped piece in the *New York Times* (17 July) titled "Barbarous Confinement" noted: "Many of these prisoners have been sent to virtually total isolation and enforced idleness for no crime, not even for alleged infractions of prison regulations.... Since it is not defined as punishment for a crime, it does not fall under 'cruel and unusual punishment,' the reasoning goes."

To be branded a "gang member"—a tag that can be applied at whim—is a one-way ticket to the SHU, where many prisoners have languished for years and some for decades. One way out, besides death, is "debriefing"—snitching out other prisoners as gang members, itself a possible death sentence for not only the prisoner but his family as well. As the hunger strike spread, a spokesman for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) railed that the willingness of thousands of prisoners to starve themselves was further evidence of "the power, influence and reach of prison gangs"!

The strike at Pelican Bay ended on July 21 with the CDCR agreeing to allow SHU prisoners to have wall calendars and woolen caps to wear in freezing cells during the winter, as well as promising some educational programs and a review of the "debriefing" procedures.

The super maximum jails like Pelican Bay, begun in the 1980s, were designed, in the words of one journalist, for "psychological emasculation, to crush the spirit, strip a man of the last vestige of defiance and force him to conform to the most punitive system the courts will allow" (London *Sunday Times*, 23 May 1993). High-tech sensory deprivation chambers like the SHU throw into stark relief the nature of the bourgeois state as an apparatus of organized violence to preserve the rule and profits of racist American capitalism.

The prisons are the concentrated expression of the depravity of this society, a key instrument in coercing, torturing and brutalizing those who have been cast off as the useless residue of a system rooted in exploitation and racial oppression. Elementary humanity demands that the SHU and all other solitary confinement chambers be abolished. But it will take nothing short of proletarian socialist revolution to destroy the capitalists' prison system and sweep away all the barbaric institutions of the bourgeois state.

## From Attica to Pelican Bay

The Pelican Bay hunger strike took place on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the murder of San Quentin prisoner and Black Panther Party spokesman George Jackson, who was gunned down by prison guards who alleged that he was "trying to escape." The murder of Jackson was the spark that ignited the multiracial rebellion of inmates at Attica prison in upstate New York in September 1971. Declaring: "We are *men*! We are not beasts and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such," the Attica prisoners demanded decent medical care, a minimum wage for prison work, rehabilitation and education programs and an end to censorship of reading material.

In their struggle against the conditions in America's prisons, Jackson and the Attica inmates reflected the mass social struggles that were taking place outside the prison walls, from the "black power" movement to the protests against the Vietnam War. One of Jackson's comrades was Hugo Pinell, who became a leader of the prisoners' rights struggle in the late 1960s while incarcerated in California. The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have long fought for freedom for Pinell, a Pelican Bay SHU prisoner who took part in the hunger strike. Pinell has been locked in solitary for some ***40 years*** but remains unbroken and unbowed.

George Jackson was killed and the Attica revolt crushed with particular vengeance because the capitalist rulers feared that the prisoners had come to understand their repression in political terms. When New York governor Nelson Rockefeller moved in for the kill at Attica, he declared that the "revolutionary tactics of militants" were a "serious threat to the ability of free government to preserve order." Four days after the revolt began, the state unleashed a 1,000-strong assault team. Twenty-nine inmates were killed. After the slaughter, hundreds of naked, overwhelmingly black prisoners were lined up in the yard like slaves at an auction in the Confederate South. Here was a searing image of the reality of black oppression in the U.S. Built on the foundation of black chattel slavery, the forcible segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society endures as a fundamental prop for preserving capitalist rule in the United States.

Forty years after Attica, America's prisons are overflowing with black and Latino youth, the majority of them rounded up under the "anti-crime" crusade and especially the "war on drugs." Republican president Richard Nixon launched a "war on crime" that was centrally aimed at the

*continued on page 10*

Getty

Inmates packed into double and triple bunk beds in gymnasium at California's Chino State Prison.

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## Youth Fights Victimization for Sagging Pants

# Flying While Black

KGO/CNN

**Deshon Marman**

On June 15, Deshon Marman, a 20-year-old black University of New Mexico student, boarded a US Airways flight to Albuquerque at San Francisco International Airport. While Marman was getting on the plane, a flight attendant ordered him to pull up his sagging pants. Marman, who was carrying two bags, agreed to do so once he had put down his luggage. After he was seated, the pilot, backed up by police, came to Marman's seat to demand that he get off the plane for supposedly ignoring flight crew instructions. A cell phone video taken by another passenger shows Marman as resolute but respectful in insisting that he had complied, had paid for his ticket and was minding his own business "like everybody else." The pilot responded: "You're not like everybody else."

In racist America, Deshon Marman's dreadlocks and sagging pants, styles popular among black youth, made him a "thug" not deserving to be treated with human decency. When all the other passengers were ordered to get off the plane, Marman had had enough and agreed to take a different flight. But that's not what happened. As soon as he had stepped off the plane, Marman was handcuffed, put in leg restraints and taken away to San Mateo County jail.

Marman was held overnight on suspicion of trespassing, resisting arrest and a felony count of assaulting a police officer. The latter charge was based on one cop complaining that he had twisted his knee in the process of assaulting the student. Indeed, the charges were so transparently manufactured after the fact that the county District Attorney struggled to come up with a legal basis to prosecute Marman, finally deciding to drop the charges on July 13. Marman has since sued US Airways over the outrageous treatment he received.

A star football player with a 3.0 grade point average, Deshon Marman made it out of San Francisco's impoverished Bayview-Hunters Point ghetto by winning a scholarship to the University of New Mexico. When he boarded the US Airways flight, he was returning from the funeral of his best friend, who had been gunned down in the violence endemic to a society that has written off the lives of black ghetto youth as expendable. But as a young black man in America, Marman was still a marked man. He was a target because his clothes and hairstyle were seen as a statement of defiance of white racist authority. Rest assured that a white guy wearing pajama pants, or a butt-crack-revealing construction worker, would not have faced the same treatment.

Marman's ordeal will be familiar to Muslims or anyone with brown skin or a Near Eastern-sounding name who might have flown since September 11, 2001. Under the so-called "war on terror," airports are virtual armed security camps where passengers are subject to everything from full-body scans to being groped in humiliating body searches that have come to be referred to as "gate rape." At the same time, the drive for profit in the airline industry has meant not only increased misery for the passengers but intensified union-busting assaults on airline workers unions. As for passengers' "security," safety standards have been thrown overboard by airline companies in the name of cutting costs.

Now, pilots are encouraged to use their prerogative to arbitrarily remove anyone they consider to be "endangering" a flight or they otherwise view as an "undesirable." In this racist country, such decisions depend on the particular prejudices, or not, of the flight crew and pilot. After Marman's arrest, a US Airways spokesman said that the airline's dress code forbids "indecent exposure or inappropriate" attire. But days later it was revealed that a different US Airways crew had no problem letting on a transvestite with barely any clothes on at all. Nor should they have had a problem!

The all-sided bigotry enflamed by the capitalist rulers is used to divide and weaken the working class while increasing the destitution of blacks, immigrants, the poor and all those consigned to the bottom of this society. Rather than acting as cop auxiliaries, airline workers should be championing the defense of all the oppressed, which is fundamental to a genuine fight for everyone's well-being against the rulers of the decaying, barbaric U.S. capitalist order.■

TROTSKY

LENIN

### Inequality and the Capitalist Economy

*A key premise of social-democratic reformism is that wealth inequality under capitalism is fundamentally a matter of unequal distribution of goods, to be remedied by "tax the rich" schemes and other such measures. As Karl Marx pointed out, the distribution of wealth is determined by the capitalist mode of production, in which the bourgeoisie owns the factories, land, etc., while the working class sells its labor power in order to survive. To eliminate scarcity requires a series of proletarian revolutions internationally, through which the working class will collectivize the means of production and create and develop a global planned economy.*

Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of non-workers in the form of capital and land ownership, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labour power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the collective property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one. The vulgar socialists (and from them in turn a section of the Democrats) have taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long been made clear, why retrogress again?

—Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875)


**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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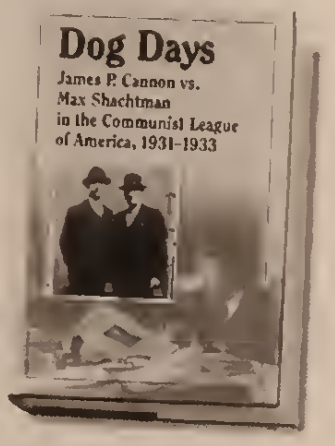
## Publications of the Prometheus Research Library

### Dog Days: James P. Cannon vs. Max Shachtman in the Communist League of America, 1931-1933

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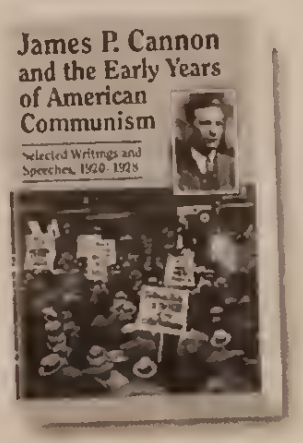


This volume of Cannon's writings covers the period when he was one of the principal leaders of the American section of the Communist International. Extensive introduction and explanatory notes, bibliography, glossary, index, 16 pages of rare photographs. 624 pages; smyth-sewn binding. (1992)

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# Carl Lichtenstein

WV Photo

**1942–2011**

Our comrade Carl Lichtenstein, a 40-year member of the Spartacist League and archivist for the Prometheus Research Library, died unexpectedly of a cerebral hemorrhage on July 7 at the age of 68. To lose an actively engaged and apparently healthy comrade in this way is a shock and an anguishing loss. Our hearts go out to Carl's wife Alice, his son Lee and all his family, and to all Carl's friends, colleagues and comrades around the world.

Carl Lichtenstein was a scientist. He earned a Ph.D. in high-energy nuclear physics at Cornell University and went on to post-doctoral work at Harvard University's cyclotron laboratory. He authored or contributed to over 30 published scientific studies, 19 of them in *Physical Review D* or *Physical Review Letters*, the top journals in the field of physics. He had the intellect, training and requisite meticulousness to test Nobel Prize-winner Richard Feynman's theory of quantum electrodynamics and was the first author of a published study about this ("Wide-Angle Bremsstrahlung," *Physical Review D*, 1 February 1970). Carl loved physics and he clearly could have gone far in academia and lived comfortably. But he decided to devote his time and mind to the cause of workers revolution.

Carl and Alice joined the Spartacist League's youth organization in Boston in 1971. Shortly thereafter, Carl joined the party. Carl was a member of Spartacist League branches successively in Boston, Los Angeles, Ann Arbor and New York. In Los Angeles, he served on the local executive committee, as education director and as party representative to both the youth organization and an industrial fraction. He was also a member of the Militant Caucus of AFSCME Local 2070.

Carl was truly a declassed intellectual who rejected metaphysical idealism and the arrogant false dichotomy between mental and manual labor. He was good with his hands and understood labor and maintenance projects as thinking work. He served on party defense squads at demonstrations and was a valuable contributor to *Workers Vanguard* articles on science. But Carl's most significant and enduring contribution was his role in establishing and sustaining the Spartacist League's central archive, the Prometheus Research Library, as a working research facility for a wide range of Marxist studies.

Carl was selected by the Spartacist League's 1974 National Conference to serve on the Archival Commission. The central document adopted by the National Conference noted the purpose of this new party body:

> "One of the crucial tasks of the vanguard of the proletariat is the struggle to function as the memory of the working class. An important component of this struggle for continuity is the systematic assembling, propagation and critical assimilation of the primary documentary history of the workers movement. Given the passage of time and the accumulation of distortions and vulgarizations, only the precise, verified reconstruction of past realities can serve as a true compass."

Although he was outside the New York center at the time, Carl was a driving element of this work. Carl wrote letters to all locals suggesting interviews with historic cadres of the revolutionary movement who lived in their areas (e.g., "You should try to hunt down the Spartacusbund [1919] member in NYC mentioned in my earlier letters") and wrote careful notes on how to research, conduct and record this work. His antenna picked up news of archival openings and finds at libraries and bookstores around the country. The Archival Commission sent out national circulars with Carl's suggestions, informing locals that "Carl's letters to locals and individual comrades carry the same authority as those sent from the CO [Central Office]. Our work has been hindered by his 3,000 mile separation from the center. We look forward to working more closely with him in the not too distant future."

In an August 1975 letter, he wrote:

> "What we seem to be becoming is an activist research library operation. I believe this is appropriate, but it is a big job. We still must have a primary task of gathering documents and other materials, but it is also clearly our responsibility to see that these materials are made known and available to cdes [comrades] who can use them, and to bend our efforts in accord with various organizational needs:
>
> "(1.) This implies that we must systematize our existence as a library.... What will be happening is the creation of a card catalog arrangement of our holdings, so items and subjects can be located by someone interested."

In 1977, Carl gave a report for the Archival Commission at the Fifth National Conference of the Spartacist League.

Carl sought to make revolutionary history available to guide all aspects of party work, from the trade-union arena to youth work, in the U.S. and internationally. Carl noted how Spartacus Youth League members could assist Marxist scholarship: "Write relevant papers on historical topics—some could also be made into YSp [*Young Spartacus*] articles. Cdes should send in copies of such papers already written, even if they're not proud of them. Bibliographies, too."

In December 1975, Carl, Alice and two other comrades mined—and salvaged—a good deal of Leon Trotsky's archives in Mexico City, where the exiled leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution lived before he was assassinated by a Stalinist agent in 1940. Trotsky's papers were in stacks on every surface: the floor, tables, shelves, cabinets. Carl mapped the collection, directed comrades to gingerly sift through the piles, selected documents to photocopy and returned the originals to their stratigraphic location, like the senior archeologist on a dig. Carl wrote in a report to the Archival Commission:

> "Being at T's house creates a mixture of awe and depression. I will not expatiate on this. We mostly kept very busy.... If we could do it without insulting them, I'd like to send a replacement for the ridiculously faded red flag over the grave....
>
> "The lower shelves showed much evidence of mice—upsetting."

The Prometheus Research Library became a regular contributor to the upkeep of Trotsky's house and library.

Carl moved to New York, where he was needed to build the party's "activist library." En route, he interviewed Hugo Oehler, an important Communist Party (CP) trade-union organizer who was won to the Left Opposition following the expulsion of James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, from the CP. Carl Lichtenstein is, to the best of our knowledge, the *only* researcher to record an interview with Hugo Oehler. Carl recalled, "He had I guess what you would call a security fetish." Carl looked for the man reading the *New York Times* in the Denver, Colorado, public library and followed him to a public park, where they discussed the early years of American Trotskyism. Their discussion was covered by traffic noise and occasional squawking by Lee, six months old, sitting on Carl's knee.

The Oehler interview was part of a deliberate party effort to piece together the history of an internal struggle in the American Trotskyist movement that prefigured the 1940 split in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) on the Russian question. This extensive research culminated years later in the publication of the Prometheus Research Library's second book, *Dog Days: James P. Cannon vs. Max Shachtman in the Communist League of America, 1931-1933* (2002).

The PRL's collection grew out of the intentionally collected and organized holdings of James Robertson, founding cadre of the Spartacist League. As PRL archivist, Carl substantially filled out the archives, carefully compiling and annotating internal documents of the early CP and the American Trotskyists. Wandering library stacks with eagle eyes, he located rare and important records, such as the internal bulletins of the Communist League of America, predecessor of the SWP.

Carl's knowledge of the history of the Marxist movement and his attention to detail made him a superb archivist. In November 1991, the SWP published an article in the *Militant* appealing to readers to help them fill out their holdings of their own history with missing bulletins and documents. Carl leapt at the opportunity for archival collaboration with the notoriously proprietary SWP. He informed the SWP that we indeed had and would provide copies of bulletins they sought. Through meticulous cross-checking of the SWP's indexing with actual documents and with Louis Sinclair's bibliography of Trotsky's writings, Carl figured out and notified the SWP that they had mislabeled and conflated a few items. The SWP replied: "Your letter was the only reply we have received thus far to our appeal for missing materials." A second letter to Carl stated: "We thank you for calling these errors to our attention and we will pass the information along to the appropriate editors at Pathfinder for correction in upcoming reprintings." In good turn, the SWP provided the PRL with documents Carl requested. Carl excelled at archival collaboration with opponent political organizations and individuals, based on the understanding that the history of the workers movement belonged to the workers movement internationally.

Along with the PRL's librarian Diana Kartsen (1948-2007), Carl Lichtenstein was centrally responsible for the preparation and production of two of the PRL's books (*James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* [1992] and *Dog Days*). He was also central to production of the six *Prometheus Research Series* bulletins. Carl took pride and satisfaction in the increased use of the PRL and developed a "patron's tour" to teach party cadre how to use the library's database, which he helped develop, as well as where to locate and how to handle archives.

We have suffered a terrible loss and will keenly miss Carl's knowledge, kindness and wit. The Prometheus Research Library embodies Carl Lichtenstein's lifework. Those who wish to honor Carl's memory and legacy by assisting the purpose of the PRL—to collect, preserve and make available the historical record of the international workers movement—are invited to make contributions to Spartacist, earmarked "In memory of Carl." Mail to: Spartacist, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. A memorial meeting is planned for early fall in New York City. Please phone (212) 732-7861 for details.

Lichtenstein Family

**Carl in 1975 at work in the Trotsky Museum in Coyoacán, Mexico City.**

# Peruvian Elections and the Shadow of Fujimori

## Reformist Left Backs Bourgeois Populist Humala

The second round of Peru's presidential elections on June 5 produced a narrow victory for the bourgeois populist Ollanta Humala, a former military officer during the darkest days of the country's internal war in the 1980s and early '90s. Humala, who was backed by Peru's trade unions and reformist left groups, defeated Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of disgraced former president Alberto Fujimori. During his decade in power (1990 to 2000), Fujimori unleashed brutal terror against workers, peasants and the poor, using the excuse of the peasant-based insurgency of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). Nearly 70,000 people were killed in this bloody conflict. At the same time, Fujimori's economic "shock therapy" sharply increased poverty among the rural and urban masses. Later sentenced to 25 years in jail on murder, kidnapping and corruption charges, the ex-president was regularly visited by his daughter at his exclusive prison in Lima during the election campaign.

In the years since the fall of Fujimori, Peru has seen an economic boom under presidents Alejandro Toledo and Alan García. Mineral exports—including copper, zinc, gold and silver—have surged, while the country has signed free-trade deals with the U.S., the European Union and China. Tall buildings and fancy restaurants, hotels and shopping centers have proliferated in Lima. But there has been little or no progress at all for the majority of Peruvians, who live in the shantytowns of the capital or in the country's rural areas. As of 2009, 62 percent of the population was still trying to survive on less than $3 a day.

The backdrop to Humala's election was an explosion of protest among the rural poor. Spain's *El País* (7 June) newspaper reported that there are "more than 230 active or latent social conflicts" in Peru, notably protests by indigenous communities against land seizures. In 2009, a clash between police and the indigenous peoples inhabiting the northern Amazonian province of Bagua left 33 dead, 23 of them cops, and hundreds injured. This followed months of protests against government decrees opening the area to imperialist investment, which the García regime was forced to withdraw. This June, clashes between indigenous Aymara people and police over concessions to the Canadian mining company Bear Creek left at least six people dead and 30 wounded in the southern region of Puno, near the Bolivian border. The government was again forced to back down, canceling Bear Creek's mining license.

Humala received his strongest vote in the largely indigenous rural areas, while Keiko Fujimori got a majority of the vote in Lima and other coastal cities. In the first round, where Humala won 32 percent and Fujimori 24 percent, the main candidates of the ruling establishment were all eliminated, including an ex-president, a former cabinet minister and Lima's former mayor. The candidate of the ruling APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) quit early in the campaign, and APRA itself won only four of the 130 seats in the Congress.

The votes for Humala and Fujimori were not so much for them as against their counterpart. Many of those who voted for Humala in the second round did so to prevent the comeback of "fujimorismo." Among the bourgeois forces who backed him were ex-president Toledo and the acclaimed right-wing writer (and former presidential candidate) Mario Vargas Llosa, who proclaimed that Humala would "defend democracy in Peru" and prevent "the ridicule of a new dictatorship" (EFE, 19 May). Meanwhile, many who voted for Keiko Fujimori did so based on persistent imputations that Humala was a radical leftist or even a communist, and to more or less maintain the status quo.

AP

**July 6: Peru's President-elect Ollanta Humala meets with Hillary Clinton at State Department in Washington, D.C.**

Thomas Quirynen

**June 2009: Deadly police attack on indigenous protesters in oil-producing area of Bagua Province.**

Some commentators noted that Humala probably won the election because Keiko Fujimori made more mistakes. She went from defending her father's government as "the best Peru has had in its history" to apologizing for his crimes. Among the crimes that received widespread attention were those perpetrated by the nefarious Colina Group, an army death squad linked to the highest levels of the regime. It was responsible for atrocities like the 1991 Barrios Altos massacre, in which 15 people accused of being supporters of Sendero Luminoso were killed in downtown Lima, and the 1992 La Cantuta massacre, in which nine students and a university professor were kidnapped and killed. Also in 1992, the Colina Group assassinated union leader Pedro Huilca, secretary general of the General Central of Peruvian Workers (CGTP), and then framed up members of Sendero Luminoso for the killing.

Another issue received widespread attention during the campaign: the forcible sterilization of more than 300,000 women as part of a government campaign from 1993 to 1999. This followed an International Monetary Fund "recommendation" to control population growth. The Fujimori government implemented several sterilization plans, being particularly aggressive in indigenous rural areas. Several documents have surfaced showing that the authorities established minimum numbers of sterilizations per week. Over 25,000 men, again mainly indigenous, were also sterilized. Many women have come forward to denounce these barbaric acts, which had serious effects not only physically (they suffer from severe and constant pain and can no longer work their land) but also psychologically; many ended up being abandoned by their husbands.

### Break with Bourgeois Populism!

Humala, whose Nationalist Party is essentially a personal vehicle, campaigned at the head of an alliance called Gana Perú (Peru Wins) that included reformist left groups like the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP) and the Socialist Party, among others. These reformists continued their perpetual policy of tying the working class to bourgeois forces; for example, they supported Alberto Fujimori for president in 1990 against Vargas Llosa. But this time they were an integral part of a victorious "left" slate, running their own candidates for Congress under the Gana Perú banner. For ostensible socialists to push a program of collaboration with bourgeois forces is always and everywhere a betrayal of the interests of the proletariat.

The labor bureaucracy—including in the CGTP, the Workers Unitary Central (CUT), SUTEP teachers union and other smaller unions—also actively supported Humala and some unions ran candidates on his slate. The Stalinist PCP and Maoist Patria Roja-Movimiento Nueva Izquierda (Red Fatherland-New Left Movement [PR-MNI]) are the driving force behind the major unions, although they are fairly weak parties. Last year the PR-MNI backed the victorious candidate for mayor of Lima, Susana Villarán of the bourgeois Fuerza Social (Social Strength) coalition. Buoyed by this success, the PR-MNI initially stood aloof from Humala's alliance, only to end up in a full-throttle campaign for the new president.

Far from being some sort of radical, let alone a communist, Humala has bent over backward to show that he will be a "responsible" leader of capitalist Peru. In the 2006 elections, which he lost to García after leading in the first round, Humala campaigned as an ally of Venezuela's bourgeois populist strongman Hugo Chávez. This provoked the ire of the Peruvian capitalists and their U.S. imperialist masters, who feared that he would move to nationalize sectors of the economy as Chávez has done in Venezuela, thereby reversing the wave of privatizations that began under Fujimori.

This time around, Humala made every effort to distance himself from Chávez, pledging not to undertake nationalizations and to maintain a "free-market economy," albeit with "a better and more just distribution of resources." He promoted the "Brazil model," where a popular-front regime centered on the Workers Party (PT) has overseen capitalism for the past nine years. The PT sent Luis Favre (former pseudo-Trotskyist and brother of Jorge Altamira, leader of the Argentine Partido Obrero) to help Humala's campaign. On the other side, Keiko Fujimori surrounded herself with her father's circle and hired as a consultant Rudolph Giuliani, the former mayor of New York City who was infamous for unleashing police terror in the ghettos and barrios.

After the vote, the losing camp speculated how they could have prevented Humala's victory and the winners repeated incessantly that they "respect private investment and private property." All agreed that it was necessary to "keep the markets calm" and "reconcile the Peruvian family." Humala's first foreign visit after his victory, before being sworn into office on July 28,

## Free Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

# New Move to Reinstate Death Sentence for Mumia

Terry/Gamma-Liaison

**Mumia Abu-Jamal**

The Philadelphia district attorney's office recently petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate the death sentence for black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The D.A. is seeking to reverse an April 26 ruling by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, which for the second time upheld a 2001 decision by District Court judge William Yohn overturning the sentence on the grounds of faulty jury instructions (see "Federal Appeals Court Orders New Sentencing Hearing," *WV* No. 980, 13 May). Yohn simultaneously upheld every aspect of the frame-up conviction that sent Mumia—a former Black Panther Party spokesman and later a MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist—to death row on false charges of killing Philly police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. From top to bottom, the courts have repeatedly refused to hear the overwhelming evidence of Mumia's innocence, including Arnold Beverly's confession that he was Faulkner's killer.

The D.A.'s petition reviles the Third Circuit for obstructing the legal lynching not just of Mumia but also of many others, largely black and poor, railroaded to death row "up South" in Philadelphia. The brief rants that the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, signed by Bill Clinton to speed up the pace of executions, "will remain ineffective in the Third Circuit until the circuit court enforces it." The prosecution calls on the Supreme Court to order the Third Circuit to apply the 1996 law to foreclose virtually any federal *habeas corpus* challenge to Pennsylvania death sentences. Where the Supreme Court stands on ruthless application of the death penalty was seen on March 28, when it turned down the appeal of Troy Davis, a black inmate in Georgia, despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence.

In its own way, the D.A.'s brief highlights that Mumia's case is crucial in the struggle to abolish the death penalty. The ultimate sanction wielded by the capitalist rulers in their repression of workers and minorities, the death penalty is a barbaric legacy of medieval torture. In the U.S., capital punishment can be traced directly back to chattel slavery, when black people could be put to death for any act deemed "insolent" or a challenge to slaveholders. Since then, the death penalty has gone hand in hand with KKK lynchings and summary executions carried out by cops on the street. Over 3,200 sit on death rows across the U.S., 54 percent of them black or Latino.

The cops, prosecutors, lawmakers and their mouthpieces in the bourgeois press will not rest until Mumia is strapped onto an execution gurney. Mumia's fight for life and freedom is not for him alone. By executing this eloquent spokesman for the oppressed, the forces of the state want to send a message to all who would fight against the exploitation, oppression and imperialist war inherent in the decaying capitalist system that they, too, are in the state's gun sights. The only "alternative" to execution held out by the courts is that Mumia rot in prison for the rest of his life, without the possibility of parole. As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have always insisted, fighters for Mumia's freedom must place no reliance on the racist capitalist courts but must look instead to link Mumia's cause to the class struggles of the multiracial proletariat. To put a final halt to the grisly workings of the capitalist rulers' machinery of death will take nothing less than proletarian socialist revolution. ■

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All South America

Spartacist Canada

**Lima's modern city center contrasts with its impoverished slums.**

was to Brazil. Meeting with PT president Dilma Rousseff, he saluted that country's "successful model of growth." (After nearly a decade of PT rule, Brazil remains one of the most unequal countries in the world, with an immense gap in living standards between the elite at the top and the worker and peasant masses.) He then went on to hold friendly meetings in Washington with Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. And now a conglomerate of U.S. and Peruvian capitalists has announced the largest mine investment in Peru's history.

Among the tiny pseudo-Trotskyist organizations in Peru, the Nuevo PST (New Socialist Workers Party, followers of the late Argentine adventurer Nahuel Moreno) unashamedly supported Humala. In an online article, they called to "respect the hope that vast sectors of workers and the people have put in Ollanta Humala," adding that "we are ready to join them in their experience of voting critically for him" (litci.org, 17 May). The Corriente Marxista Revolucionaria, supposedly a left split from Alan Woods' International Marxist Tendency, advised Humala to "adopt a socialist program which will openly call to eliminate capitalist private property and replace the bourgeois state with a workers democracy" (militante.org, 9 June). While sometimes posturing in defense of Peru's poor and indigenous masses, Humala is a bourgeois politician who will necessarily defend the brutal and exploitative profit system against any threat to capitalist rule.

### Fujimori's Bloody Legacy

During the rule of Alberto Fujimori, the International Communist League denounced the government's bloody war against workers, peasants, the poor and leftist groups like the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) guerrillas. In April 1997, an army death squad staged a coldblooded mass execution of 14 MRTA members who had occupied the Japanese ambassador's residence, where they had held various military butchers, high-ranking businessmen and government officials hostage in an attempt to win freedom for some 450 of their comrades in Fujimori's prisons. The ICL organized protests internationally against this massacre, calling to "Free all victims of Fujimori's terror!"

While criticizing the MRTA's guerrillaist strategy as incapable of eliminating capitalist exploitation and oppression, we saluted the valor of its militants, who had won broad sympathy among the Peruvian workers and peasants. We contrasted the MRTA to Sendero Luminoso, whose activities generally merited nothing but revulsion. Despite the leftist rhetoric it espoused, Sendero was known for its pathological violence, from publicly executing prostitutes to murdering political opponents, including MRTA supporters and union organizers. As we wrote: "This repulsive group appears to have parallels with Pol Pot's genocidal Khmer Rouge in Cambodia with its primitivist, anti-urban ideology, cult of personality, and gangster operations" ("Peru: For Workers Revolution to Smash Fujimori Dictatorship!" *WV* No. 659, 10 January 1997).

As for the remnants of Sendero today, the wing around jailed leader Abimael Guzmán calls for "national reconciliation." Guzmán's lawyers formed a party, the Movimiento por Amnistía y Derechos Fundamentales (Movement for Amnesty and Fundamental Rights), with the idea of participating in the elections. In the end, a couple of their supporters ran on the Justice, Technology and Ecology Party list. Sendero's other, still clandestine, wing was blamed by the authorities for the killing of five soldiers during an ambush of a military patrol that was headed to supervise the elections in the Apurímac and Ene Rivers Valley area of southeastern Peru. This is a historic Sendero base that has continued to see periodic rebel activity.

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*continued on page 10*

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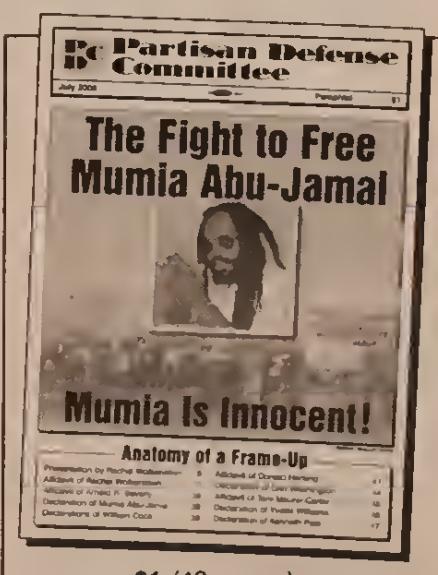


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**For Workers Republics on Both Sides of the Irish Sea!**

# Down With the Monarchy and the "United Kingdom"!

*We reprint below an article from* Workers Hammer *No. 215 (Summer 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.*

**WORKERS HAMMER**

When the starving poor of Paris demanded bread, the haughty French Queen Marie Antoinette famously said "let them eat cake." For British working people facing the deepest economic crisis since World War II, the equivalent is "give them a royal wedding." Hardly had the hoopla subsided over the nuptials of William and Kate in April when the whole royal circus was re-enacted in the meticulously choreographed visit of Elizabeth II to Ireland a few weeks later.

A popular joke doing the rounds in the run-up to the royal wedding went along the lines of: "Prince William says he doesn't want the traditional fruit cake at the wedding, but Prince Philip says he doesn't give a toss and is going anyway." Forever the butt of jokes due to his unstoppable, bigoted ravings on royal engagements, Prince Philip is often portrayed as a senile old reactionary in contrast to a reserved, reverential Her Majesty. But whatever comparable tact the Queen may display, Prince Philip's outbursts are an unashamed expression of the racist, class contempt that is the institution of the monarchy.

David Cameron [Conservative prime minister] and his cabinet celebrated the announcement of the royal wedding last autumn with a banging of fists on the table in the manner of those educated in public schools [elite private schools], inculcated as they are with the arrogance that they are born to rule. For Cameron & Co., the event would be a "wedding of mass distraction" in which the population would fawn over the marriage of two pampered parasites and would put the devastating cuts and job losses to the back of their minds. But that is not quite how it turned out, as Polly Toynbee reported on the "big day" itself:

> "Yet despite months of coverage, rising to a crescendo of print and broadcasting frenzy this week, the country has remained resolutely phlegmatic. Cameras pick out the wildest enthusiasts camped out or dressed as brides, yet the Guardian/ICM poll and others put those expressing 'strong interest' at only 20%. "In poll after poll, more than 70% refused to be excited. Laconic, cool, only half the population said they would watch Friday's flummery."
>
> —*Guardian*, 29 April

If there was little enthusiasm in England, Scotland and Wales showed even less excitement over the royal spectacle.

But we had to put up with it nonetheless: the absurd yet very real gossip about the Prince marrying a "commoner," which says a lot about this country's "in-your-face" class prejudice. Kate Middleton's millionaire parents belong to the top 0.5 per cent income bracket and this "commoner" went to the same public school as the wives of the prime minister and the chancellor. In the eyes of the aristocracy, she is not high-born enough for her and her sibling to avoid the tag of "the wisteria sisters" in reference to their social climbing, or to avoid the "doors to manual" dig at her mother, a former airline stewardess. There was the endless bunting, the portrait of "Wills and Kate" emblazoned on the Union Jack—that butcher's apron, the flag of an empire where "the sun never set" and the blood never dried and of the continued imperialist slaughter of Iraq, Afghanistan and now Libya.

Reuters photos

**Left: Queen Elizabeth II in Dublin with Irish president Mary McAleese at memorial to fighters for freedom from British rule, May 17. Above: Protest against Queen's visit.**

For those wanting to protest against the royal carnival, the message from Metropolitan Police Commander Christine Jones was that this could be deemed criminal. In a statement she declared, "this is a day of celebration, joy and pageantry" adding, "Any criminals attempting to disrupt it, he that in the guise of protest or otherwise, will be met by a robust, decisive, flexible and proportionate policing response." In a suspension of democratic rights, dozens of people were barred from central London on the day of the wedding. Using the occasion as an excuse for a political clampdown, squats and social centres were raided.

Several student protesters were arrested and charged, including Alfie Meadows, the student who required brain surgery when he was struck down by police at a tuition fees protest in December. Scores of people were pre-emptively arrested in connection with the wedding, including several who were charged with "conspiracy to cause a public nuisance" for planning activities such as a Right Royal Orgy event, a proposed piece of street theatre in London. The bourgeoisie were taking no chances with their feudal freak show. Some 5,000 police officers were part of the royal wedding security operation on the day, with 550 armed police put on a shoot-to-kill footing.

Abolition of the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established churches is an elementary democratic demand but one that is integral to a revolutionary programme in Britain. The continued existence of such feudal relics is an assertion that class privilege and vast inequality is part of the "natural" order of things in which each—"the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate"—has his place. We stand in the tradition of the English Revolutionaries of the 17th century who "turned the world upside down," overthrowing the feudal order with the king at its head, and of the revolutionary Chartists in the 19th century who disdained to bow in awe before the monarchy and marched with pikes and muskets in their hands. Opposition to the monarchy as the pinnacle of the British class system is a precondition for building a party fit to overthrow capitalist rule in this country.

## The Queen "Forgives" the Irish!

The Queen's visit was the first time that an English monarch had set foot in southern Ireland since independence in 1921, indeed since George V's visit in 1911. The bourgeois press in Britain and Ireland was awestruck as the Queen, accompanied by Irish president Mary McAleese, laid a wreath at the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin, dedicated to those who fought for Irish freedom against the British crown, from the 1798 United Irishmen to the 1916 Easter Rising and the 1919-21 war of Irish independence. Typical of the obsequious press coverage was the London *Independent*'s statement that "what made the appearance all the more memorable, was the Queen's tilt of the head—apparently silencing centuries of conflict" (independent.co.uk, 22 May).

More grovelling followed when the Queen went to the national stadium in Croke Park, scene of the original Bloody Sunday when in November 1920 British auxiliary troops, the hated "Black and Tans," opened fire on a crowd at a Gaelic football match, killing 14. This massacre was an act of revenge for the assassination by Irish nationalists of eleven undercover British agents earlier that day. In a speech in Dublin the Queen intoned: "With the benefit of historical hindsight, we can all see things which we would wish had been done differently—or not at all." Thus the British rulers would whitewash the history of their colonial rule in Ireland. This "reconciliation" is of a piece with Tory prime minister David Cameron's grudging admission a year ago that the 1972 Bloody Sunday killing of 14 unarmed protesters in Derry was "unjustified," while adding that of course Bloody Sunday is not the defining story of the British Army's role in Northern Ireland from 1969-2007. At the time we wrote:

> "This is a blatant attempt to bury the memory of British Army brutality in Northern Ireland once and for all. The theme about the need to 'move on,' to erase the memory of Bloody Sunday from history, is echoed *ad nauseam* in the British capitalist press. By portraying Bloody Sunday as an exceptional incident within an otherwise impeccable record, the Saville Report [on Bloody Sunday] is being used to refurbish the credentials of the imperialist forces who today shoot-to-kill with impunity in Afghanistan and Iraq."
>
> —*Workers Hammer* No. 211, Summer 2010

**Beheading of Charles I in 1649. Regicide marked overthrow of feudal order in England.**

An official visit to Dublin by an English monarch would have been unthinkable if not for the imperialist "peace deal" codi-

fied in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, under which the Irish Republican Army (IRA) agreed to disarm itself and the Irish nationalists of Sinn Fein joined the Northern Ireland government in Stormont. Sinn Fein refused to condemn or protest the Queen's visit, and were not part of the formal reception. The "peace process" gave cosmetic surgery to the Orange state [Northern Ireland] but it remains fundamentally the same repressive, anti-Catholic state that it was at the time of partition in 1921. Independence for Ireland replaced the yoke of British domination with a clericalist, Catholic state in the south. We fight against the national oppression of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland; at the same time we oppose the bourgeois nationalist programme for a "united Ireland," which would create an oppressed Protestant minority. We insist that the conflicting claims of the interpenetrated Catholic and Protestant communities can only be equitably resolved in the framework of an Irish workers republic within a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles.

The Queen's visit and the ballyhoo about the "normalisation" of relations between Britain and Ireland is not unconnected to the fact that today Britain has more trade with Ireland than it does with Brazil, Russia, India and China combined. Amid fears that the Irish government might default on its loans from the European Central Bank, the debt-ridden British government has a vested interest in ensuring that its loans are paid back. An article in the Irish satirical magazine the *Phoenix* (3 June) titled "British Queen frees the Irish from themselves" wryly noted: "The British lent us their Queen for a few days so as to revive our tourist industry and to bury the hatchet, sorry, the past." It summed up: "Britain offered a loan (that protects British investors) and makes tut-tutting noises at nasty continentals."

A comrade reporting from Dublin during the Queen's visit said: "The visit has been accompanied by the largest security operation in the history of the state, with Dublin in almost complete lockdown for three days." There were small protests by groups of Irish nationalists which were encircled by riot police who continually harassed and beat the demonstrators and arrested many. The Irish Anti-War Movement, dominated by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), also called a "black balloon" protest under the slogan: "Remember the deaths at the hands of Her Majesty's forces in Iraq and Afghanistan." Conveniently not mentioned is the Irish bourgeoisie's role in supporting the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan, including making Shannon airport available for U.S. military operations. Also whited out of history is British imperialism's role in Northern Ireland.

## "United Kingdom" and English Domination

The *Sunday Times* (29 May) reported that: "The Queen has signalled in a private meeting with David Cameron her concern at the prospect of the break-up of the United Kingdom." This was in response to the victory of the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP) in the Scottish elections in May. Similarly, at the time of her 1977 Silver Jubilee the Queen declared: "I cannot forget that I was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom, Great Britain and Northern Ireland." We revolutionaries oppose the reactionary entity known as the "United Kingdom," which incorporates the Orange statelet in Northern Ireland and rests on English domination over Scotland and Wales. The Westminster parliament reflects the favoured status granted to finance capital and the City of London by the ruling class, which has contempt for the former industrial areas of northern England, as well as Scotland and Wales.

A tirade of English chauvinism followed the victory of the SNP which now enjoys an outright majority in the Scottish parliament. The English press worked up a lather over the fact that the SNP might hold a referendum on independence—heaven forbid that the Scots should be allowed to decide such a question for themselves! The Spartacist League upholds the right of self-determination for the Scottish and Welsh nations—which means the right to separate (or *not* to separate). In reality, SNP leader Alex Salmond is in no rush to set a date for a referendum on independence because despite the popularity of certain SNP policies, such as lower student tuition fees than in England, the electorate might well vote no to independence. The SNP's vision is one of an independent capitalist Scotland, under the English Crown and accepting the British armed forces. If an independent capitalist Scotland came into existence it would fare little better than Ireland, whose "Celtic Tiger" economy was once the SNP's model.

Our attitude to the national question in Britain is grounded in intransigent opposition to all forms of nationalism—first and foremost the dominant English chauvinism. Our programme is for workers revolutions to overthrow all the capitalist regimes in Britain and in Ireland, North and South. The myriad forms of national oppression will be resolved when workers revolution has swept away capitalist rule on both sides of the Irish border and both sides of the Irish Sea.

Portrait by Robert Walker

**Above: Oliver Cromwell. Right: 1922 British Communist Party cartoon contrasts Labour Party leaders' and Bolsheviks' attitudes toward Cromwell and revolution.**

## Recall the Fate of Charles I!

In opposition to the royalist blather of the ruling class about "tradition" and "heritage," we revolutionary Marxists have our own traditions. We recall the historic fate that befell Charles I in 1649 as a result of the defeat of the Royalist forces by Oliver Cromwell's army. The English Revolution that began in 1640 took the form of a civil war between Royalists, who had the support of the landed aristocracy and the Anglican Church, and the Parliamentarians who included the rising capitalist class, backed by the labouring masses of the day. In 1645, Cromwell founded the New Model Army, heavily drawn from the ranks of yeomen, peasants and labouring classes of the cities, who became the decisive force in the revolution.

The New Model Army inflicted crushing defeats on the Royalists and in 1645 they captured the King. The conservative bourgeois elements in Parliament sought a compromise with the Royalists, enraging the army ranks who were led by the Levellers, the left wing of the revolution. In 1647 Parliament tried to disperse the army regiments, ordering them to enlist for Ireland or face immediate dismissal. The ranks mutinied, seized the King, held him captive and demanded that Cromwell should resume leadership of the army, which he did. But political debates raged between the Levellers and the generals and a split in the army was averted when the King escaped (or was freed) and the civil war re-ignited. Throughout 1648 Cromwell's army again inflicted defeats on the Royalists. In Cromwell's absence the army leadership in London, in alliance with the Levellers, decided to put the King on trial, which meant he would face execution. After some initial hesitation Cromwell endorsed the regicide, declaring: "I tell you we will cut off his head with the crown on it." The execution of Charles I on 30 January 1649 marked the decisive defeat for the feudal order in England. The result was unprecedented progress, not least in the abolition of the monarchy under the appropriately irreverent and rational wording "the office of a king in this country is unnecessary, burdensome and dangerous to the liberty, safety and public interest of the people." The House of Lords was also abolished for a time, being deemed "useless and dangerous." The English Republic adopted Common Law over the "Royal Prerogative," abolished the "Star Chamber" system of courts and permitted a degree of religious dissent.

Two years after Cromwell's death, the monarchy was restored in 1660. But there would be no going back to the situation where the feudal nobles ruled over the bourgeoisie. Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, pointed out that, in the course of defeating the Royalist side, Cromwell had created a new society and that this could not be undone by decrees of Parliament. He explained:

> "In dispersing parliament after parliament Cromwell displayed as little reverence toward the fetish of 'national' representation as in the execution of Charles I he had displayed insufficient respect for a monarchy by the grace of God. Nonetheless it was this same Cromwell who paved the way for the parliamentarism and democracy of the two subsequent centuries. In revenge for Cromwell's execution of Charles I, Charles II swung Cromwell's corpse up on the gallows. But pre-Cromwellian society could not be re-established by any restoration. The works of Cromwell could not be liquidated by the thievish legislation of the Restoration because what has been written with the sword cannot be wiped out by the pen."
>
> —"Where Is Britain Going?" (1925)

## Cromwell's Conquest of Ireland

After the defeat of the Royalists in England, Cromwell organised an expedition to Ireland. In the outline of a report on the Irish question to the Communist Educational Association of German Workers in London, Karl Marx noted that "By engaging in the conquest of Ireland, Cromwell threw the English Republic out the window" (16 December 1867).

Cromwell's conquest of the country was a continuation of the English Crown's hundreds of years-long subjugation of Ireland. It represented, in the words of the Marxist authority on the English Civil War, Christopher Hill: "the first big triumph of English imperialism and the first big defeat of English democracy." A necessary precondition for the English bourgeoisie's invasion of Ireland was rooting out the Levellers from the ranks of the army. The prospect of being shipped to Ireland had provoked a Leveller revolt in the army in 1649. This time, unlike in 1647, Cromwell and his generals did not side with the mutineers. The Levellers were crushed by Cromwell at Burford, their leaders were arrested, four were executed. The episode showed that while the English Revolution, as a bourgeois revolution, was progressive in its ascendancy against feudalism, once the bourgeoisie took power, the progressive content soon gave way to reaction as the capitalist class consolidated its hold on power. Once established, bourgeois rule in its Irish colony was based on the profit-accumulating, imperialistic interests of that class.

In his writings on Britain, Trotsky emphasised the revolutionary traditions that the British working class needed to reclaim and emulate. This is in counterposition to the reformist Labour Party "lefts" who insisted that British workers could learn little from the experience of the Russian Revolution, as Britain was a more civilised, Christian country with established democratic channels through which socialism could patiently and peacefully be phased into existence. Trotsky advocated that British workers should learn from the Roundhead [Cromwellian] and Chartist traditions of revolutionary struggle, as against the Labour Party's Fabian tradition of gradualism and pacifistic class-collaboration. Trotsky observed:

> "The British bourgeoisie has erased the very memory of the seventeenth-century revolution by dissolving its past in 'gradualness.' The advanced British workers will have to re-discover the English revolution and find within its ecclesiastical shell the mighty struggle of social forces. Cromwell was in no case a 'pioneer of labour.' But in the seventeenth-century drama, the British proletariat can find great precedents for revolutionary action."
>
> —"Where Is Britain Going?" (1925)

Contrasting Cromwell with the Labour Party leaders who "dare not refuse pocket money to the Prince of Wales," he declared "the dead lion of the seventeenth century is in this sense immeasurably greater than many living dogs."

New York Public Library

**1839 Chartist uprising in Wales.**

On the Chartist tradition Trotsky insisted: "As the Chartists tossed the sentimental preachers of 'moral force' aside and gathered the masses behind the banner of revolution, so the British proletariat is faced with ejecting reformists, democrats and pacifists from its midst and rallying to the banner of a revolutionary overturn." Chartism was the first mass independent workers movement, brought into being by the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. The powerful left wing of the Chartists was republican, internationalist and revolutionary-minded. They asserted the right to bear arms and bitterly opposed the new, semi-military

*continued on page 8*

# Monarchy...

*(continued from page 7)*

professional police in working-class districts across the country. Chartism was defeated and demoralised in the aftermath of the failure of the European-wide 1848 revolutions and the ensuing reaction. This paved the way for "Christian-socialist" Fabianism and the Labour Party, which since its founding in 1900 as the political expression of the trade union bureaucracy has worked to tie the working class to the bourgeois order.

### Her Majesty's Labour Party Vassals

Loyal to the capitalist state and its institutions, the Labour Party has always been a reliable prop for the monarchy, whether through staunch support or presenting the institution as a harmless irrelevance. At the Labour Party conference of 1923, when a resolution questioning the need for the monarchy was proposed, the "left" George Lansbury argued "what is the use of bothering about that just now" and the motion was voted down by 3,694,000 to 386,000!

The Labour leaders have a history of grovelling before the Crown—from Ramsay MacDonald, Labour's first prime minister, donning royal plumage when invited to Buckingham Palace in 1927 and graciously allowing King George V to arrange the 1931 popular-front government between Labour and the Tories, to Tony Blair's craven service to the royal family following the death of Lady Diana and his insistence that the Queen is the "best of British."

There was at least one amusing spectacle at the royal wedding—much to his chagrin, Blair's fawning over the monarchy was not even rewarded with an invite. Whether the royal snub was a result of Blair's conversion to Catholicism, the fox-hunting ban so loathed by the aristocracy or just his connection to the Labour Party (however tenuous its links to the working class) we can only speculate. Labour's current leader, Ed Miliband, was keen to show he was fit for prime-ministerial office with his support for the royals and contempt for working people when, in the period before the royal wedding, he railed against the possibility of strikes being called anywhere near the occasion. Not that strikes were ever likely to disrupt such a patriotic affair given the present bunch of trade union misleaders.

Whatever occasional mutterings against the monarchy may come from Labour Party "lefts," the reality on the ground is very different. That darling of the reformist left, Tony Benn, an avowed republican, has in fact sworn an oath in defence of the Crown, as a member of the Queen's Privy Council, a position granted to everyone who becomes a governmental cabinet minister. It should be remembered that Benn was a member of the Labour cabinet that sent troops to Northern Ireland in 1969. Labour's shameful tradition also includes Arthur Henderson who, as a cabinet member, was in the King's "advisory" Privy Council when the British government ordered the execution of James Connolly for his heroic role as the head of the proletarian Irish Citizen Army in the Dublin 1916 Easter Rising against British rule.


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**Israel "celebrates" founding by slaughtering Palestinians again**

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AFP

**July 2: Protest in Montreal against visit by Britain's Prince William.**

### British "Far Left": Latter-Day Fabians

The British "far-left" organisations are steeped in Labourism and so they soft-pedal any opposition to the monarchy. In 1997, during the media-induced hysteria surrounding the death of Princes William and Harry's mother Diana Spencer, the left whistled to the tune of Tony Blair's "people's princess" platitudes. Our article at the time reported:

> "The fake-revolutionary left, ever in Labour's tow, was swept along, nominal disclaimers to the contrary notwithstanding. Diana Spencer may have been the girl from the 10,000 acres next door, but for the centrist Workers Power group, 'Her depression, bulimia, suicide attempts and ultimately divorce provided a glitzy microcosm of the plight of millions of less wealthy women' (*Workers Power*, September 1997). That (and more) said, Workers Power assured its readers that it would 'not be joining in the wave of national mourning' and even vowed to 'do everything' to get the monarchy 'scrapped forever'—everything, that is, but oppose Blair's Labour Party at election time.
>
> "In the same vein, but even more nauseating, was the so-called Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).... The CPGB's *Weekly Worker* (4 September) carried a front-page eulogy by chief spokesman Jack Conrad. While allowing that 'even a bourgeois republic is preferable to the anti-democratic monarchy,' Conrad outdid even Blair himself in his treacly musings for the 'troublesome princess' who 'represented a soul in a soulless world': 'Her brief 36 years epitomise the struggle and fate of the 20th century personality who by chance and/or design has been iconised and thus commodified and sold by the uncontrollable, all pervasive power of capital'."
>
> —*Workers Hammer* No. 159, November/December 1997

In contrast, our article maintained:

> "From the standpoint of the working class, the death of the 'Princess of Wales' was not a tragedy; special interest in the affairs of royalty, which places the life of an aristocrat above that of her chauffeur, betrays something of a servile instinct. The archaic institution of monarchy should long ago have been consigned to the dustbin of history."

For its part, the British SWP has gone a step further than the other reformists. At the founding of their ill-fated Respect Coalition in 2004, SWP leaders ensured that a resolution which called for the abolition of the monarchy was *voted down*!

For the reformist left, any opposition to the monarchy is framed by the consideration that it is an expensive excess and an embarrassment to the façade of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

Obviously, the vast cost of maintaining the royal parasites is an obscenity, but while this may be the main point of emphasis for liberals and reformists, Marxists realise capitalist budgets are made in the interests of the bourgeoisie and, for the bourgeoisie, royal visits, weddings and the monarchy itself are cheap indeed for the reactionary purposes they serve. The emphasis on tradition, heritage and historical continuity which this feudal relic implies is supposed to foster illusions in a class-harmonious, evolutionary society, free of tumultuous social change. Our comrades in the U.S. captured this perfectly in a 1977 article on the Queen's Silver Jubilee:

> "The Queen thus represents the British counterpart to the American myth that U.S. society is classless. In England it is manifestly impossible to deny the existence of class-based inequality. So the ruling class maintains that while there are classes, and there may be shifts in the class structure, ***there must be no class struggle***. The monarchy is the living and familiar sign that there is a grossly unequal social place for everyone, and that this is historical and inevitable. That is why the Queen is treated with such dignity, why this cow is sacred."
>
> —*Workers Vanguard* No. 164, 1 July 1977

The monarchy does not merely fulfil a symbolic role, to the advantage of the British bourgeoisie, but stands ready as a rallying point for reaction. The Queen is the head of state; it is to her, and not parliament, that the armed forces and its officer corps swear an oath of allegiance. In the event of social crisis, in which the bourgeoisie felt its rule to be threatened, it is quite conceivable that the monarchy would be used in a reactionary mobilisation to stabilise the capitalist order, providing constitutional cover for a right-wing bonapartist coup. During WWII, discussions between the pro-Hitler Duke of Windsor, formerly Edward VIII, and the Nazis in Germany placed the Duke as the rumoured likely prospect to head a quisling government in England after the fall of France in 1940.

In fact the royal prerogative of Queen Elizabeth II has already been used to bring down a government in Australia, where she is also head of state. As our Australian comrades explained:

> "In 1975 Labor prime minister Gough Whitlam, his government the object of a concerted CIA destabilisation campaign, threatened to expose the role of the top secret U.S. spy bases. The Queen's man and more importantly the CIA's man, Governor General John Kerr, dismissed the elected government. Utterly committed to the institutions of the capitalist state, including the constitutional powers invested in the Queen, the ALP [Australian Labor Party] tops preached loyalty to the parliamentary process rather than let an enraged working class get 'out of hand.' The events of 1975 illustrated how the constitutional monarchy in Britain and here could be used in some future crisis to bestow 'legitimacy' on the establishment of a reactionary, possibly military regime to defend the capitalist order."
>
> —*Australasian Spartacist* No. 144, Autumn 1992

### Workers Revolution Will Sweep Away Medieval Rubbish

Karl Marx reported with great affection a protest by the British working class against class oppression in 1855. This was a protest against the Sunday Trading Bill and Beer Bill which ensured shops were closed and restricted the opening hours of "places of public entertainment" (most notably public houses): their "betters" had decided the workers should be on their knees in church instead. Seeing the stark hypocrisy of the upper classes, who were not affected and who spent the day on leisurely carriage rides in London's Hyde Park, a mass demonstration of the workers was called there and concluded in the following confrontation with English high society:

> "A babel of jeering, taunting, discordant ejaculations, in which no language is as rich as English, enveloped [the upper classes] from both sides. As it was an improvised concert, instruments were lacking. The chorus therefore had to use its own organs and was compelled to confine itself to vocal music. And what a diabolical concert it was: a cacophony of grunting, hissing, whistling, squeaking, snarling, growling, croaking, shrieking, groaning, rattling, howling, gnashing sounds! A music that could drive men mad and move a stone. To this must be added outbursts of genuine old-English humour peculiarly mixed with long-contained seething wrath. 'Go to church!' were the only articulate sounds that could be distinguished. One lady soothingly offered a prayer book in conventional binding from her carriage. 'Give it to read to your horses!' came the thunderous reply, shouted by a thousand voices."
>
> —Karl Marx, "Anti-Church Movement—Demonstration in Hyde Park" (28 June 1855)

So moved by this demonstration of proletarian class outrage, Marx wrote: "We saw it from beginning to end and do not think it is an exaggeration to say ***that the English Revolution began in Hyde Park yesterday***."

We look to the revolutionary proletariat of these islands to abolish the monarchy and the House of Lords—this time for good—and the established churches, along with the bourgeois rulers and all other forms of social parasitism, through socialist revolution! To do so the working class will need its revolutionary organisation. Our aim is to build this, modelled on Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party which, acting as a tribune for all the oppressed, led the storming of the tsar's "prison house of peoples" and liberated one sixth of the earth from autocratic, chauvinist oppression and capitalist exploitation. The tsar was prevented from gaining asylum in Britain with his cousin King George V, who feared the repercussions this deeply unpopular move would have had for his own dynasty. Lenin and Trotsky's desire was to put the tsar on trial as with the fate of Charles I in the English Revolution and Louis XVI in the French Revolution. But with the counterrevolutionary White armies closing in on where the tsar and his family were imprisoned, the local Bolsheviks were forced to wipe the Romanov dynasty from the face of the Earth. As Isaac Deutscher relayed from Trotsky's diary:

V. Deni and M. Cheremnykh

**1920 Soviet poster shows Lenin sweeping away kings, priests and capitalists.**

> "In the midst of civil war, [Trotsky] says, the Bolsheviks could not leave the White Armies with a 'live banner to rally around'; and after the Tsar's death any one of his children might have served them as the rallying symbol. The Tsar's children 'fell victim to that principle which constitutes the axis of Monarchy: dynastic succession'."
>
> —*The Prophet Outcast, Trotsky: 1929-1940* (1963)

Forward to a world where the perversions of monarchy and dynastic succession are remembered only as abolished relics of the past!■

# In Honor of Dr. Kevorkian

On June 3, Dr. Jack Kevorkian died of a pulmonary embolism in a Detroit-area hospital at the age of 83. Dr. Kevorkian was widely known and often reviled for assisting those who were terminally ill to end their lives. He used a simple criterion to determine eligibility for his intervention: "The patient must be mentally competent, the disease incurable" (London *Independent*, 11 November 1993).

Last year's HBO movie, *You Don't Know Jack*, compellingly presents the reality of those faced with a lingering death in this society—no resources, no hope and no foreseeable end to their pain and agony. Jack Kevorkian provided, within the limits of his abilities, an answer to their plight. People afflicted with painful, incurable diseases should have the right to determine how and when they die. Any doctor should be able to give them the help that he did.

Kevorkian acquired his nickname "Doctor Death" in the 1950s for advocating that death row prisoners have the right to volunteer for medical experiments that would result in their deaths. But it was not until the 1990s, when he began to provide terminally ill individuals with the medical means to end their lives, that religious fanatics and law enforcement officers used the moniker as a campaign slogan to hound him.

The forces of God and the capitalist state were determined to incarcerate Kevorkian and successfully lobbied for a 1993 Michigan law, aimed specifically at him, banning physician-assisted suicide. Nevertheless, he continued his efforts, and after several acquittals further attempts to try him under the law were abandoned. It was not until 1999 that Kevorkian was convicted of second-degree murder after he administered the fatal dosage to Thomas Youk, who was suffering from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). This was the first time Kevorkian had personally carried out such an act, having previously assisted in 130 suicides. The CBS news show *60 Minutes* played a videotape of the procedure that was provided by Kevorkian, who wanted prosecutors to charge him in order to force the courts to take up the issue. Kevorkian believed that by pursuing his case in the courts he could obtain legal affirmation of the right to medically assisted suicide.

AP

**Dr. Jack Kevorkian with euthanasia device he invented.**

Reuters

**Kevorkian handcuffed after April 1999 sentencing. He was convicted of murder for assisting death of terminally ill man.**

Kevorkian served eight years of the 10-to-25-year sentence, obtaining release in 2007 only after promising not to assist in any more suicides. His release was spurred in part by the revulsion of most Americans to the spectacle of Terri Schiavo as she lingered in a state of ongoing vegetative decay. A seven-year effort by Schiavo's husband to end her maintenance on life support was stymied, until 2005, by the capitalist state in the service of the ghouls of the "right to life" movement. Kevorkian, after his release, continued the fight to allow the incurably ill the right to obtain such medical assistance as needed to end their lives.

His efforts have not been fruitless. He inspired the passage of laws allowing such assistance in Oregon and Washington, and more than 600 such suicides have been performed since these were enacted. It was largely in response to his attacks on the medical establishment's callous indifference to the terminally ill that pain management became a hot issue. Programs willing to employ a more generous use of potentially addictive analgesics to assist patients in agony were developed. But even these increments of progress have been fiercely opposed from the beginning by the powers that be.

The Lethal Drug Abuse Prevention Act, designed to overturn the Oregon law, was put before Congress in 1998. When that failed, an attempt was made to pass a more liberal-sounding version with the same purpose, the Pain Relief Promotion Act of 1999. That bill simply languished in the Senate, whose members were torn between appeasing the religious fanatics and offending the sentiments of most Americans, who think that people should have the right to end their pain and suffering.

The American Medical Association (AMA) quickly joined ranks with those opposing the Oregon law. AMA president Dr. Thomas Reardon described a measure passed at its 1999 convention: "The AMA opposes physician-assisted suicide as it is antithetical to the role of the physician as healer. We are committed to providing the best possible end-of-life care. The Pain Relief Promotion Act supports both these goals." In reality, both the 1998 and 1999 bills were designed to assure more pervasive Drug Enforcement Agency monitoring of pain medication and, thus, increase the misery of those in need.

Today, "right to life" forces have successfully pushed through bills in several states banning all abortions after 20 weeks' gestation on phony "pain relief" grounds. Cast as redressing supposed fetal agony, the bills are in fact designed to maintain women as breeding stock for a creator who apparently requires a quite large harem. People should simply have the right to do whatever they wish with their bodies, whether it involves seeking pleasure, avoiding pain or ending an unwanted pregnancy.

While pain management of some merit now exists in places, the AMA's pretense that pain medication is easily forthcoming, and that needed therapy for the distress and depression experienced by the terminally ill is likewise readily available, is simply crap. As before, a doctor who is moved to address a patient's agony for the most part still must do so on the sly, fearing prosecution by the capitalist state for murder or drug dealing.

Death comes to all, but it is the capitalist order, the lifeblood of which is profit accumulation, and its perturbations that plunge the masses into misery and despair and threaten the ability of most to survive. The misery that order creates is today reflected in the attacks on funding for Medicaid, hospice care, home health care and food stamps, with further extensions of unemployment funds next to face the ax. And the Obama version of national medical care, like Bill Clinton's earlier failed effort, is designed to cut such "unnecessary" costs as whatever decent wages and benefits unionized workers used to receive because they had wrested them from their bosses.

The bourgeois politicians, with religion as a prop, justify, defend and perpetuate this savagery. As we wrote in *WV* No. 593 (4 February 1994) in the article "In Defense of Dr. Kevorkian":

> "The priests and preachers simply provide the ideological overlay to the interests of the rich, propertied few. To maintain their rule, they try to enforce their control over all aspects of the lives of the rest of us, from birth to death. Those with the money and the power believe that all good things exist only for them. It's like the old joke where a British 'noblewoman' experiencing her first orgasm squeals in delight, 'Ooh, this is much too good for the lower classes!' In the case of life and death, the bourgeoisie has the bucks to buy the best medical care there is and, if that fails, the connections to check out when they want to. But allowing the 'lower classes' similar leeway might lead the exploited and oppressed to believe that they have the power to shape their own future—not only how they die, but more importantly how they live."

The quest for the domination of the planet by the various imperialist powers necessitated two worldwide conflagrations that consumed many millions of lives. The imperialists continue to add millions of their victims to the sacrificial altars of their dominance. The capitalist order cannot be transformed to provide a world in which human life, worth and dignity count and where the wealth, resources and advanced medical technology are put in the service of the planet's toiling masses. That transformation requires international working-class socialist revolution. Jack Kevorkian was not an advocate of such, but he was a fighter for the right of all to die with dignity. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, is proud to have defended him and to honor his memory. ■


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# Prison Hell...

*(continued from page 1)*

repression of black militants and the inner-city poor following the ghetto upheavals of the 1960s. This campaign was augmented as deindustrialization began to hit a wide swath of the country in the late 1970s. Largely due to the "war on drugs," by the mid 1990s the prison population had grown by a million—one place behind bars for every job lost on the assembly lines.

The lives of inner-city blacks, who once supplied a "reserve army of labor" to fill jobs during times of economic expansion, were written off as expendable, no longer worth providing even the minimal subsistence needed to raise the next generation of wage slaves. Virtually every social program benefiting the ghetto and barrio poor was slashed. Having created the conditions in which black and Latino youth had little or no way out of desperate poverty, the rulers branded them as criminal "outlaws."

The "war on drugs" went into high gear under Republican president Ronald Reagan, with the avid support of black Democrats like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton who joined in the ideological crusade against ghetto youth as drug-pushing predators. By 2010, the prison population had reached 2.3 million people, the majority of whom were convicted on non-violent drug charges. The Spartacist League calls to *decriminalize drugs*. We oppose all laws against "crimes without victims"—from drug use and gambling to prostitution and pornography—which at bottom are designed to regiment the population in this viciously racist, bigoted, class-divided society.

As we wrote 16 years ago in "Lockdown U.S.A." (*WV* No. 618, 10 March 1995): "The bourgeoisie's vicious drive to imprison and execute ever-increasing numbers of ghetto youth reflects a sinister impulse to genocide against a layer of the black population." The election of America's first black president has not changed this cruel calculus of torture and death. While one in four black children have lost their fathers to prison by age 14, Barack Obama lectures young black men for having insufficient "family values."

This is a common refrain of the black petty bourgeoisie. A thin layer of blacks benefited from the affirmative action and "war on poverty" programs instituted in response to the civil rights struggles and to quell the ghetto revolts. Today, much of the black middle class reviles the inner-city poor as "bringing down the race." As Commander-in-Chief, Obama is the overseer of the plantation of racist American capitalism, which subjects tens of thousands of black, Latino and other U.S. citizens locked up in solitary to the kind of horrors perpetrated in the name of the "war on terror" against prisoners in Guantánamo.

Reuters

**Chino inmate locked in cage used to hold those waiting for medical appointments, counseling or permanent cells.**

## Cruel but Not Unusual

With less than 5 percent of the world's population, the U.S. has 25 percent of the prison population of the entire planet. Over 7.3 million men, women and children are now in jail or prison or on parole or probation. And California leads the nation in the number of people behind bars. The state's prison population exploded from 25,000 in 1980 to 168,000 in 2009. In the same period, 23 new prisons were built. But this has not been enough to warehouse those put on the state's conveyor belt to mass incarceration.

California prisons are packed to almost 200 percent capacity in conditions so depraved that a narrow majority of the U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that they violated the Eighth Amendment prohibition of "cruel and unusual punishment." It is notable that the ruling came from a Court that has itself worked assiduously to shred prisoners' rights, as well as those of the population as a whole. But at bottom the ruling represents little more than an application of some cosmetics to the barbarism of the U.S. "justice" system.

Going back nearly three decades, a series of lower court orders have directed California prison authorities to relieve overcrowding, provide medical care and stop abuse by prison guards. In 2005, a California federal court found it to be an "uncontested fact" that "an inmate in one of California's prisons needlessly dies every six to seven days due to constitutional deficiencies." Such "deficiencies" include denial of medical care as well as the risk to life and limb that comes with being confined with hundreds of others, triple-bunked in gyms and cafeterias, for 24 hours a day in conditions described as a "giant game of survivor." Mentally ill prisoners are locked up in "telephone-booth sized cages without toilets." One prisoner a week kills himself, a suicide rate 80 percent higher than the national average. Even the former head of the prisons in Texas, the execution capital of the U.S., described California's prisons as "appalling" and "inhumane," adding that "in more than 35 years of prison work experience I have never seen anything like it."

Such conditions are the product of literally thousands of laws enacted by Democratic and Republican governors alike, over the past 30 years. In his first round in the governor's office, when he was known as Governor Moonbeam by those who saw him as the voice of "la-la land" liberalism, Jerry Brown, a Democrat, knocked down any possibility for early release. Most rehabilitation programs were eliminated, and the length of mandatory prison terms was increased. The supercharged "tough on crime" climate laid the basis for the passage of Proposition 184 in 1994. The harshest "three strikes" law in the country, it mandates 25 years to life for any third offense by those with two prior serious convictions. Among those behind bars for life under this law are people convicted on their "third strike" of stealing $2 socks or $20 work gloves.

Anti-gang injunctions make it a crime if the cops find you anywhere in public in the company of an alleged gang member. Once you're railroaded to prison, the brand of "gang affiliation" can land you in the torture chambers of solitary confinement. Even after serving their time, prisoners remain ensnared by laws that bar ex-felons from public housing, food stamps and many other benefits. California has 210 laws and regulations preventing felons from getting jobs or licenses—even to be a barber, an interior designer or a guide-dog trainer. Criminal background checks are mandatory on most employment applications. Seventy-seven percent of those released from prison in California end up back behind bars—the highest recidivism rate in the nation.

In 2009, Lovelle Mixon, a young black man raised on the destitute streets of the East Oakland ghetto who was out on parole, blew away four cops with an assault rifle in two separate confrontations after he was pulled over by the police. An article in the *San Francisco Bay View* (24 March 2009) remarked at the time: "Lovelle Mixon was America's worst nightmare: the Black man with nothing to lose." As an ex-felon on the streets, he had no prospects. When confronted by the

# Peru...

*(continued from page 5)*

all wings of the capitalists in the fight for a workers and peasants government. The most left-talking of these populists, Chávez in Venezuela, has used the country's oil profits to implement some modest social reforms as well as some land distribution and minimal nationalization of industry. But while we defend such nationalizations against imperialist attack, these are not socialist measures; rather, they are part of a program to tie the working masses to the domestic bourgeois rulers.

Peru today presents an extreme example of combined and uneven development. Vast shantytowns abut the colonial-style mansions of the venal bourgeoisie; the rich, beholden to their U.S. imperialist masters, live in luxury while millions of rural indigenous poor struggle merely to survive. As elsewhere in the semi-colonial world, the national bourgeoisie's weakness and dependence on imperialism make it utterly incapable of achieving the tasks of the classic bourgeois revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, which laid the basis for economic modernization and the creation of industrial societies.

The sole force that can show a way forward is the working class, with its tremendous potential social power, particularly in the rapidly growing (and hugely profitable) mining and natural gas industries. The proletariat must champion the cause of all the victims of Peruvian capitalism, from the indigenous masses to the urban poor and women, whose deep oppression is reinforced by the hold of the Catholic church. Smashing the chains of imperialist oppression requires the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party dedicated to the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of a workers state. Such a revolution must have the perspective of spreading elsewhere in Latin America—notably to the industrial powerhouse of Brazil—and, crucially, to the advanced capitalist countries of North America.

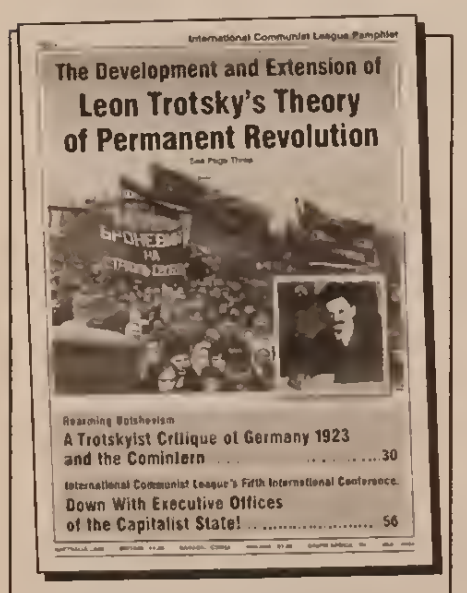
The ICL is fighting to build an international revolutionary workers party—a reforged Fourth International—that can link the struggles of the workers of the semicolonies to those in the imperialist centers. In Latin America, such a party will be built in opposition not only to the flagrantly pro-imperialist "neoliberal" right wing but also to bourgeois nationalists and reformist politicians of all stripes. The task of tearing Latin America out of backwardness and subjugation to imperialism falls to the proletariat. As the Peruvian Trotskyists of the Grupo Obrero Marxista (Marxist Workers Group) wrote in 1946:

> "Our revolution, simultaneously democratic and socialist, cannot develop and triumph within the narrow framework of the national state. It cannot triumph unless imperialism is crushed. It cannot triumph without the assistance of revolutionary victories in other Latin-American countries.... We call upon the Peruvian proletariat to fight for its historic objectives, for world communism, in the confidence that 'the masses of the backward countries, led by the conscious proletariat of the advanced countries, will achieve communism without having to pass through the different stages of capitalist development' (*Supplementary Theses on the Colonial and National Question*, adopted by the Second World Congress of the CI [Communist International])."
>
> —"Manifesto of Peruvian Trotskyists," *Fourth International* (March 1947)■




WV Photo

**April 1997 NYC protest against Fujimori regime's massacre of Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement guerrillas.**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cops, his only future was to be sent back to jail, so he went to his death in a hail of police gunfire instead. More than 500 people came out for Mixon's funeral, their rage and defiance of the occupying army of police on their streets captured in a text message reading: "Us: 4—Them: 1."

To preserve their power and profits against those they exploit and oppress, the capitalist rulers erect ever more monstrous institutions of coercion, suppression and death, vastly expanding police powers on the streets of the U.S. while their military marauds over the planet. The medieval tortures of the rack and the screw have been replaced by the high-tech barbarism of solitary confinement, the death row gurneys of state-sanctioned murder or the more "normal" conditions of being packed in overcrowded prisons like animals in abattoirs. Unspeakably cruel, these conditions are not, however, unusual in racist America. On the contrary, such barbarism is the product of a system that has long outlived any measure of progress.

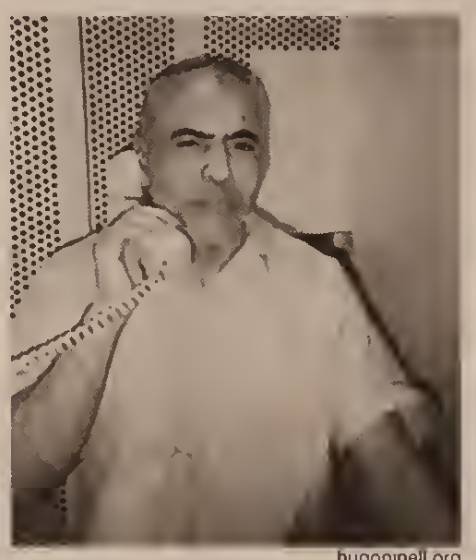
## The "Worst of the Worst": California Prison Guards

Among the biggest beneficiaries of the "war on crime" have been the sadistic jailers themselves. In the past 30 years, the size of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA) has grown from 5,600 to 33,000, their pay more than tripling during the same period from $21,000 to $73,000 a year. One of the most powerful political forces in the state, the CCPOA has poured millions of dollars into speeding up the assembly line to prison. Promoting a series of reactionary initiatives—from the 1972 reinstatement of California's death penalty to the 1994 "three strikes" law—this "union" has been a moving force behind the defeat of any attempt to alleviate prison conditions. The hellish prison conditions are their bread and butter. One guard enthused: "With 'Three Strikes' and the overcrowding we're going to experience with that, we're going to need to build at least three prisons a year for the next five years. Each one of those institutions will take approximately 1,000 employees."

If there is any criminal gang in California's prisons, the guards are it, genuinely the "worst of the worst" violent predators. According to testimony in a class-action suit brought by 3,600 Pelican Bay prisoners in the mid 1990s, California prison guards shot and killed more than 30 inmates between 1989 and 1994. Eight Corcoran State Prison guards were indicted for staging "blood sport" fights between inmates in the Secure Housing Unit. In 2010, an investigation by a *Sacramento Bee* journalist exposed the vicious racism and brutality of guards in the "Behavior Modification Unit" in the High Desert Prison, describing how one black prisoner was shackled, pepper-sprayed and then "paraded naked through the cell block in a way that that prisoner and others who witnessed the event regarded as a kind of image of modern slavery."

A throwback to the plantation overseers in the Confederate slavocracy, the guards are well-compensated for "doing their job." While savaging social programs for the poor, sick and aged in the name of balancing the state's budget, Jerry Brown increased the CCPOA's vacation and other benefits earlier this year. This was more than a simple payoff for the $2 million the prison guards provided for Brown's election campaign. The misleaders of the public workers unions shelled out millions for the Democrats, but that didn't spare their members' jobs, pensions and other benefits from the budget-cutting ax. The political power of the bonapartist thugs who run and police the prisons is fed by the racist rulers' endless "anti-crime" campaigns. Having secured ever more fabulous wealth through grinding the working class and poor, the capitalist class is well aware that it is creating a massive sea of discontent at the bottom of this society, and it spares no expense in increasing the powers of state repression—from the cops to the prisons.

Yet the armed thugs of the capitalist rulers are welcomed into the labor movement by the sellout misleaders of the trade unions. It would be hard to find a more savage indictment of the service the union bureaucrats provide as the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class. In defense of the profits and competitiveness of U.S. imperialism, they allowed the industrial unions to be ravaged. Now they are lying down in the face of an all-out war against public workers unions, offering to share in the "sacrifice" while channeling the anger of their ranks into renewed support for the Democratic Party. To maintain their dues base, they organize the strikebreaking cops and the sadistic jailers whose purpose is the violent suppression of the working class, the ghetto and barrio poor and all those perceived as potential "enemies of the state." Cops and prison guards out of the unions!



hugopinell.org

**Class-war prisoner Hugo Pinell at Pelican Bay, 2001.**

N.Y. State Special Commission on Attica

**September 1971: After murderous suppression of rebellion at New York State's Attica prison, inmates were forced to strip, crawl over broken glass and run gauntlet of baton-wielding guards.**

## Fight for a Socialist America!

While they have written off a whole generation of black youth as criminal outlaws, the rulers remain fearful that prisoners might develop some social and political consciousness. Being caught with a book by George Jackson is enough to be branded a gang member and sent to solitary. In 2005, black death row prisoner Tookie Williams was denied clemency by then-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. In sending Williams to his death, Schwarzenegger particularly singled out Williams' dedication of his 1998 book *Life in Prison* to, among others, George Jackson as "a significant indicator that Williams is not reformed and that he still sees violence and lawlessness as a legitimate means to address societal problems."

It was the violence and brutality of the prisons, combined with the social upheavals of the time, that propelled George Jackson and others to see their oppression as a product of the capitalist system. Even so, as prisoners, divorced from any role in capitalist production, they had no social power. The struggles of that time were subject to both bloody repression and co-optation by the ruling class. Today, the Pelican Bay hunger strike is a desperate product of that legacy and of the subsequent dearth of class and other social struggle against the capitalist rulers, who are loyally served by the trade-union bureaucracy. The destitution and mass joblessness in the inner cities have likewise increasingly robbed a whole layer of the black population of any social power, reducing many ghetto youth to a reactive glorification of lumpenism as a reflection of their own desperate struggle to survive by whatever means necessary.

The multiracial working class is the only force in capitalist society with both the social power and historic interest to eradicate a system rooted in its exploitation. The black workers who remain a militant backbone of the unions provide a critical human bridge for linking the power of the working class to the anger of the inner cities. To unleash this power, it is necessary to wage a political struggle to break the chains forged by the trade-union bureaucracy which have shackled labor to its exploiters.

As we wrote in "Massacre at Attica," the front-page article of the first issue of *Workers Vanguard* (October 1971):

> "We support the most militant struggle against the state. We only seek to give that struggle the strategic perspectives that will lead to the workers conquering political power....
>
> "The heroic Attica martyrs and George Jackson will long be remembered for their courageous stand against overwhelming odds. It is not the crimes (real or alleged) for which the prisoners were jailed, but the stand they took—rising far above capitalist-imposed ignorance, poverty, brutality and frame-up—for justice and against oppression, that the world's working people will remember."

The purpose of the Spartacist League is to build the multiracial revolutionary party that will lead the workers in the fight to shatter the capitalist state and all its instruments of incarceration, torture and death. When the workers internationally take political power and put the wealth now appropriated by the tiny class of exploiters to serving the needs of humanity, they will lay the material basis for achieving an egalitarian communist society, doing away with any need for a state apparatus of repression.■

# ILWU...

*(continued from page 12)*

EGT to honor its lease and hire Local 21 labor. The ILWU has made itself a party to the suit on the side of the Port. Workers should be under no illusion that the courts are on labor's side. The judicial system is an integral part of the repressive apparatus of a state that exists only to defend the interests of the ruling class—the tiny minority that owns industry and lives off the toil of working people. Just as the cops have arrested Longview ILWUers seeking to defend their livelihoods, so too will the courts enforce capitalist "law and order" against labor. It is through victory on the picket line that the ILWU will prevail.

## The Poison of Protectionism

Obscuring the irreconcilable class divide between labor and its exploiters and their state is at the heart of the trade-union bureaucrats' class-collaborationist policies. To this end, they portray Longview as one united "community," up against gigantic multinational corporations that give away "local" jobs to people from elsewhere while the small port town struggles with an unemployment rate of 12-14 percent.

Protesters at ILWU actions have carried signs reading, "Employ Local Workers for Local Jobs." But the operating engineers who are scabbing on Local 21 ***are local workers, and unionized ones at that!*** In announcing its scab deal, EGT boasted: "We're willing to hire union labor, and we got what we think is a good agreement with General Construction. Local, family-wage jobs is a really good news story."

The port bosses already try to play one longshore local against another in the competition for work. This is the road to ruin for the multiracial ILWU, whose solidarity hinges on its coastwide membership. "Local workers for local jobs" is but an echo of the protectionist poison of "American jobs for American workers" with which the labor misleaders undermine class struggle, preaching the lie that workers in the U.S. have common interests with American-based corporations and the U.S. imperialist state that defends capitalist interests.

But anyone who follows the red-white-and-blue jingoists at the top of the AFL-CIO into thinking they will get a better deal from an "American" or "local" company should take a hard look at Wal-Mart, General Motors or...General Construction. Corporations, be they U.S.-based entities or international conglomerates, are in business only to make a profit for their shareholders from the sweat and blood of those they employ. The true allies of workers here are not the "local" bosses, but fellow workers across the continent and around the world.

The poison of protectionism pits U.S. workers against their class brothers and sisters around the world, thereby helping to fuel the anti-immigrant bigotry that has been a key factor in undermining union power. The longshore unions on both coasts have become isolated bastions of organized labor amid a sea of unorganized and largely immigrant port truckers as well as non-union intermodal yard workers and inland warehouse workers. The situation cries out for a massive campaign to organize these unorganized workers into solid industrial unions, including a national union of all port workers. To wage such a struggle, the unions must champion the rights of all foreign-born workers employed in the ports. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

A new leadership of the labor movement, imbued with the program of working-class independence from the bourgeois state, can only be forged in the crucible of such class struggle. That leadership will be the militant advocate of a workers party that fights for a workers government, built in intransigent opposition to all the parties of the capitalist class. It will arm workers with the understanding that their historic interests lie in freeing humanity from the anarchy and misery of an economic system based on production for profit instead of human need.■

**NOTICE**

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated September 2.**

WORKERS VANGUARD

## Stop Operating Engineers Local 701 Scabbing!

# ILWU Battles Union Busters

## Longview, WA

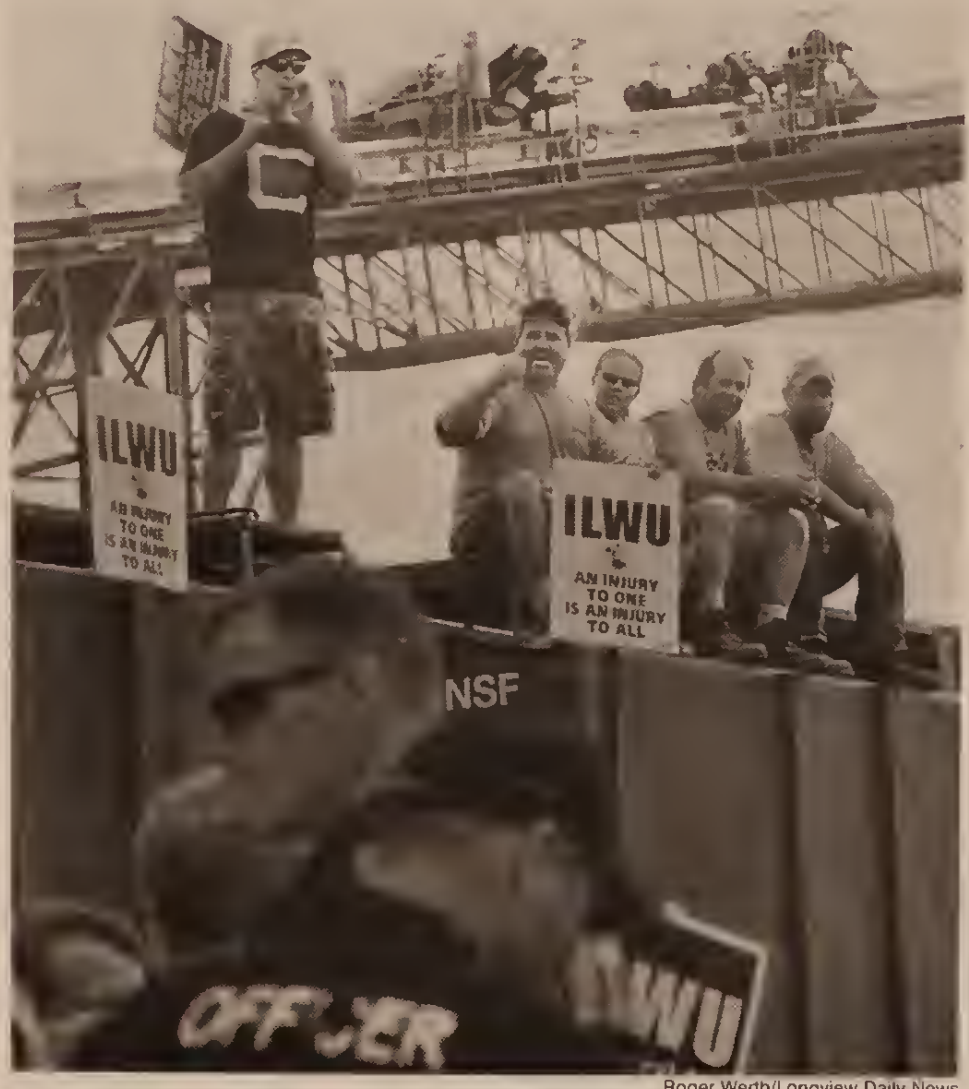
JULY 29—The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in Longview, Washington, is locked in battle with a union-busting international consortium intent on breaching the ILWU's hold on loading and unloading ships on the West Coast. EGT Development—a joint venture between St. Louis-based Bunge North America, the Itochu Corporation (an import-export conglomerate based in Japan) and the South Korean shipping company Pan Ocean STX—is in the process of opening a new, $200 million export grain terminal in Longview, the first such facility built in the U.S. in over two decades. It wants to keep out the ILWU, which works grain terminals in the Pacific Northwest.

The 200-man ILWU Longview Local 21 has stepped up to the fight. On July 11, about 100 longshoremen and their supporters tore down a chain-link fence and occupied EGT grounds, demanding that the company honor its lease with the Port of Longview, which stipulates that it must hire Local 21 members. Some 90 protesters were arrested and later charged with trespassing. But that didn't keep 600 more from around the region from blocking the railroad tracks in the dead of night on July 13-14 to stop a 107-car Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) train carrying grain to the plant, now in its testing phase. The train was diverted to Vancouver, Washington, and BNSF suspended train service to the Longview terminal.

On July 22, a militant ILWU picket forced EGT itself to temporarily suspend operations. A major show of force by cops, sheriff's deputies and state troopers three days later allowed the company to reopen the facility, with police escorting in 15-20 scabs. Seven unionists were arrested on the picket line, including one on felony charges. The cops have since forced the ILWU to limit the number of pickets at the EGT gate to 16, moving all other protesters to a site over a half mile away from the terminal. With some 100 ILWU members and supporters facing charges, Cowlitz County authorities are continuing their investigation and may charge others. Labor must demand: ***Drop the charges against the Longview unionists! Victory to the ILWU!***

The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, wrote to the Cowlitz County prosecutor protesting the arrests. The PDC noted in a letter of solidarity to Local 21: "Your fight has rightly won the support of trade unions throughout the region and of ILWU locals up and down the West Coast. The police attacks on your protests are a threat to unionized workers on the docks and throughout the U.S." In addition to longshoremen from across the region, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, the Pulp and Paper Workers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and other construction unions have participated in ILWU actions in Longview, which is located on the Columbia River. In early June, over 1,200 rallied in front of EGT Development's headquarters in Portland, some 50 miles upriver from Longview.

The overwhelming support indicates the high stakes at play. Grain export is big business in the Pacific Northwest. More than 47 percent of U.S. wheat exports use the Columbia-Snake River gateway. With demand for grain expected to skyrocket in Asia, grain export terminals in most ports in the region are expanding. All these facilities operate with ILWU labor under the Northwest Grainhandler's Agreement. If the ILWU loses in Longview, the defeat would establish a non-union beachhead for the profit-hungry international conglomerates.



Roger Werth/Longview Daily News

**Longshoremen occupy EGT grain terminal in Longview, July 11.**

"This is much bigger than Longview," said Tacoma-based ILWU Local 23 president Scott Mason (*Labor Notes*, July 21). "It's about organized labor and not having a Wisconsin." In Wisconsin, tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters flooded the streets of the state capital earlier this year to fight a massive anti-labor assault on public workers by the Republican-led state government. But the union misleaders diverted this militancy into boosting the fortunes of the Democratic Party through a campaign to recall Republican officeholders.

It's about time that the ILWU exercises its power, which lies in its ability to shut down the ports and interrupt the flow of cargo up and down the coast. But so far, the ILWU International has shown no sign of mobilizing coastwide in defense of its embattled Longview local, even as the union's future is posed. To win this showdown, Local 21 must continue to look to their allies in the labor movement and not bank on the "good graces" of the port bosses, the Democratic Party politicians, who represent the class enemy, or the courts, which routinely issue anti-strike injunctions. Solidarity from the rail workers in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLE) could be crucial to stopping the shipment of scab grain.

### Backstabbing Treachery of IUOE Local 701

Despicably, International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 701 is openly crossing the ILWU's picket lines. This ***scabbing*** began after EGT Development announced on July 17 that it had signed a five-year deal with General Construction Company from Federal Way, Washington, to operate its Longview facility. IUOE Local 701, whose members work for General Construction, agreed to take 25 to 35 of the plant's projected 50 jobs. The local had already been excluded from the Longview/Kelso Building & Construction Trades Council for refusing to sign a "letter of solidarity" committing them to abide by union jurisdictional lines and honor picket lines. Its scabbing at the grain terminal has been condemned by the Executive Board of the Oregon state AFL-CIO.

EGT Development is retailing the lie that Local 701's scabbing is a union jurisdictional dispute. But the conglomerate has run a union-busting operation in Longview since they broke ground on the facility in 2009. The company hired a Minnesota-based general contractor that in turn hired subcontractors employing largely non-union labor. In January, gearing up to open the new terminal in time for the fall harvest, EGT Development sued the Port of Longview, arguing that they were not bound by the Port's agreement with the ILWU. EGT lawyers boast that they will save $1 million in operating costs by refusing to hire ILWU members.

EGT was in negotiations with the ILWU until talks broke down earlier this year over the issue of overtime pay for 12-hour shifts. The ILWU's longshore contract with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) limits work to ten hours, with overtime paid after eight. The union's dispatch system, intended to share available work equitably, allows workers to vary their jobs day-to-day. This is a real safety issue, as monotonous and dangerous work on bulk and break-bulk cargo is the bread and butter of the small ILWU locals in the region. The ILWU must stand firm: No substandard contracts! The work at Longview must be covered by the standard Grainhandler's Agreement!

In using another union as a tool for its union-busting, EGT is following a playbook already tested by East Coast shipping bosses. In 1993, the labor-hating Holt family hired Teamsters to replace the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) at the Holts' Gloucester City terminal on the Delaware River near Philadelphia. After the AFL-CIO ruled that the Teamsters had no jurisdiction, the Gloucester local morphed into an out-and-out company union. Last year, Del Monte Co., notorious for union-busting worldwide, tore up its contract with the ILA (despite the union's offer of massive concessions) and moved its operation to the Gloucester terminal under the jurisdiction of the company's "Independent Dock Workers Local 1."

In response, last September ILA members shut down docks in Philly and the New York/New Jersey area in a two-day protest. The New York Shipping Association then slapped the ILA with a lawsuit demanding over $5 million in "damages" for the port shutdown (see "ILA Under Attack Over Strike to Save Jobs," *WV* No. 971, 7 January). Likewise in Charleston, South Carolina, Ports America and the SSA stevedoring firm are suing ILA Local 1422 after longshoremen walked off the job in May to protest the use of non-union labor on the docks. The ILWU's Local 10 in the Bay Area and its president Richard Mead are facing a similar lawsuit from the PMA, which is demanding compensation for losses incurred when Local 10 members overwhelmingly stayed away from work on April 4 to support Wisconsin workers. This was the only labor action on that supposed "national day of action" (see "All Labor Must Defend ILWU Local 10!" *WV* No. 979, 29 April). The ILWU's *Dispatcher* has yet to even mention the suit against Local 10.

EGT Development's federal court suit against the Port of Longview won't be heard until next year. But in the meantime, the Port has asked a judge to order

*continued on page 11*

WORKERS VANGUARD 50¢

No. 985 2 September 2011

## Capitalism in Crisis: Karl Marx Was Right

# We Need an All New Ruling Class—the Workers!

In 2007-2008, the world was plunged into an economic crisis unrivaled since the days of the Great Depression. The con men on Wall Street whose financial swindles were central to this collapse were bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars. The working class, black people, Latinos, the poor, the sick and the aged have been made to foot the bill, losing their jobs, homes, pensions and virtually anything else that makes life remotely livable. Today, one in six people in the U.S. are unemployed, with the average time out of work close to ten months. Forty-five million people are on food stamps, an increase of 34 percent over the past two years. Those who still have a job are being sweated to work harder for lower wages. In racist America, it's all the worse for black people and Latinos, who were among the main victims of the banks' subprime mortgage scams. One-third of black and Latino households have no net worth, with many underwater in debt. The capitalist authors of this ruin have, in the meantime, made out like bandits.

During the "jobless and wageless recovery" of the past two years, corporate profits have broken all historic records. This comes on top of the enormous enrichment of the wealthiest 1 percent of the population, who more than doubled their share of the national income in the past three decades. The government's "welfare for the rich" schemes have boosted financial speculation, artificially driving up the price of stocks, while the already rotting productive capacity of U.S. capitalism goes through the floor. With the U.S. economy overwhelmingly based on consumer spending—and with the vast majority having no money to spend—this whole house of cards is crashing down again as the economy spirals into a double-dip recession.

For over a month, the stock market has been on a wild roller-coaster ride of panicked buying and selling. Among the detonators of this panic were concerns that the Democratic president of the United States, Barack Obama, had lost control of the imperialist "ship of state" to a pack of deranged Republican Tea Party yahoos. Liberal Democrats and others raged that the Republicans were holding America "hostage" by refusing to raise the debt ceiling unless they got trillions in spending cuts and no rise in taxes for the rich. But it was the Democratic Party president himself who manufactured the myth that the "world's only superpower" was about to default on its debt like some impoverished Third World country. Even if they didn't have the money—which they do, and plenty of it—they "can always print money," as former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan put it.

WV Chart adapted from Mother Jones, source: Congressional Budget Office

Chicago Tribune

**Along with enormous growth in wealth at the very top comes further immiseration of working people and the poor. Families waiting in Chicago last Christmas Eve for food and toy giveaway.**

Obama's purpose in this charade was not much different from that of the Republicans, as he pushed for a "grand bargain" of massive austerity through slashing more than $4 trillion from so-called "entitlement" programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security over the next decade. His sop of closing a few tax loopholes for the rich was about all the Democrats could choke out to try to maintain the fraud that they are the "friends" of the little guy. And they even caved on that one.

Nonetheless, the recklessness of the Republicans has disturbed Wall Street and even their own party establishment. As Doug Henwood put it in his *Left Business Observer* (21 August): "Wall Street, the Fortune 500, center-right Dems, non-insane Republicans—who've been happy to let the Teabaggers promote the austerity agenda, would now like them to get out of the way. Not only are they undermining the blue-blood status of Treasury bonds, they're making our political system look foolish on a world stage. But when you use odious and/or lunatic agents, there is always what the CIA types call a 'disposal problem'."

The madness of the Republican Party "Tea Baggers" is merely an extreme expression of the depravity of America's capitalist rulers, who have no other way out of the economic crisis—a crisis of their own making—than to further starve the poor, bust the unions and drive down wages. As the political servants of the same capitalist class, the Democrats are increasingly incapable of even putting a phony "kinder, gentler" facade on the cruel inhumanity of imperialist rule.

WV Photo

**July 30: CWA members rally in NYC a week before Verizon strike.**

### It Is Desperately Necessary to Fight!

While Congress was gridlocked over the "debt ceiling," the imperialist masters of the European Union (EU) were in emergency session to come up with another bailout of Greece—in reality, a bailout of the investments of French and German bankers on the backs of the Greek working class. Then it looked like Spain and Italy might go belly-up as rising interest on their government bonds was freezing them out of money to keep their economies afloat. After EU and IMF bailouts of Greece, Ireland and Portugal totaling hundreds of billions of dollars, the European Central Bank started spending tens of billions more to buy up the bonds of Spain and Italy and drive down interest rates, while the governments of those two countries announced even more savage austerity.

Meanwhile, Britain was exploding in anger ignited by the cop killing of a young black man (see article, page 16). From London to other cities, thousands took to the streets in an upheaval fueled by vicious spending cuts and job slashing. The London *Guardian Weekly* (19 August) warned: "Together, the global imbalances,

*continued on page 12*

# On the Race-Color Caste Oppression of Black People

May 23, 2011

As a long time reader of WV and a supporter of your program I would like to know if a greater clarification of the term colour caste with reference to afro-americans can be made. A search of your website did not reveal anything. The term caste was used by Marx and Trotsky and was exceedingly developed by Max Weber in his sociology. Caste is an ideological term that has been reified by Weber as the major descriptor of hierarchical societies as in India, class is a scientific concept based on the relationship to the means of production. A class analysis is easily applied to caste [in] India but there is no doubt that elements of castism do exist in western societies, an example England. Maybe this distinction between weberian castism and marxist class analysis could be explained more.

Comradely greetings,
David B., Australia

AP photos

**Left: Chain gang, December 1999. Right: Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. arrested in July 2009 for "breaking and entering" his own home.**

***WV* replies:**

As we noted in the 1967 Spartacist document "Black and Red" (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9, "Basic Documents of the Spartacist League"): "From their arrival in this country, the Negro people have been *an integral part* of American class society while at the same time *forcibly segregated* at the bottom of this society." The black population in the U.S. does not constitute a separate class—i.e., a group defined by its relationship to the means of production—but faces special oppression. While black Americans span different classes, from the lumpenproletariat and the working class to the petty bourgeoisie and even a minuscule bourgeoisie, all blacks are stigmatized as blacks regardless of social status. This is why we describe the black population in the U.S. as an oppressed race-color caste.

One illustration of the caste oppression of black people in America is their disproportionate representation in the prison population and on death row. The decades-long "war on drugs" is mainly a war on blacks, especially targeting ghetto youth. On the other end of the spectrum was the arrest of distinguished Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. on his own front porch by a white Cambridge cop who thought Gates was "breaking and entering." Gates happens to be a personal friend of the current president of the United States but he can still be hassled, humiliated and perhaps much worse by any cop who feels like it.

A general social category can never substitute for an empirical analysis of a specific, historically derived formation. But of the available general sociological categories, caste is the best analogy for the position of black people in U.S. society, indicating two of its most fundamental characteristics: segregation from the rest of society along with discriminatory integration into the economy. While there are striking similarities between the oppression of American blacks, Indian lower castes and untouchables, Japanese Burakumin and so on, their particular features are historically based and specific.

Black oppression in the U.S. stems from the institution of slavery in the 17th to 19th centuries on the agricultural plantations in the South, which was key to the development of American capitalism. To ensure a stable, self-reproducing supply of labor, slaveholders clearly demarcated a hereditary social group whose social isolation and inferior status would be enforced by custom and law. Thus the myth of an inferior "race" was created. The "markers" of African descent were used to transform enslaved blacks into a permanent and perpetually vulnerable group of outcasts.

The peculiar "principle" that in the U.S. determined who might be a slave (distinguishing it from slavery in other societies) was "hypodescent," commonly known as the one-drop rule (one drop of "black" blood). Sexual relations were outlawed between blacks and whites, except for the planters, whose children with black women slaves were slaves and were "black" no matter what their complexion was. To this day, any visible degree of African ancestry remains a sign of presumptive former slave status.

Slavery was abolished as a result of the victory of the North in the Civil War, in which black troops played an important role. This was the real opportunity to smash the special oppression of black people in America. But the Northern bourgeoisie went on to make peace with the Southern planters and blacks were forced back to backbreaking labor on the land as sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Following the end of Union Army occupation of the South, naked white-supremacist rule was restored. With the Ku Klux Klan as the spearhead, the white propertied classes subjected blacks to legally enforced racial segregation, stripped them of all democratic rights and held them down through terror, especially lynching. Thus, while they were not returned to slavery, blacks in the U.S. were consolidated anew as a specially oppressed race-color caste.

Racist ideology contaminated not only working-class whites in the South but also the proletariat in the North. Today, the racial division of black and white is still the fundamental fact that defines American culture and shapes political discourse. Since the substantial entry of blacks into industry, particularly beginning with World War I, anti-black racism was added to, and took precedence over, anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic bigotry, serving as the capitalists' chief weapon in dividing and holding back the working class. Racial division is at the root of the political and social backwardness of the working class and, in general, of the reactionary features of U.S. society. It has been the most prominent factor inhibiting the development of even a reformist mass political party of the working class organized separately from the capitalist parties, such as exists in all other advanced capitalist countries.

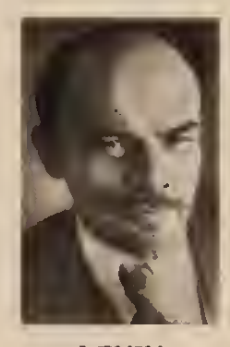
We arrived at the characterization of an oppressed race-color caste in political combat against the conscious revision of Trotskyism by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the 1960s. With the upsurge of mass civil rights struggles, the SWP accommodated the liberal-pacifist leadership of the civil rights movement as well as black nationalism. The Revolutionary Tendency, the forerunner of the Spartacist League, fought against the idea that either pro-Democratic Party liberal reformism or black nationalism in any of its variants could be a solution to the struggle of American blacks.

In 1955, Richard S. Fraser, a veteran

TROTSKY

## Capitalist Crisis and Mass Misery

*To highlight the brutal workings and irrationality inherent in the capitalist economic system, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky pointed to the effects of the Great Depression in the U.S., then under Democratic president Franklin Roosevelt. Trotsky's article, written in 1939, was initially published in excerpted form as an introduction to a selection of Karl Marx's writings titled* The Living Thoughts of Karl Marx.



LENIN

In 1930 began an ominous growth of unemployment, and in 1933 a more or less systematic aid to the unemployed, who received in the form of relief hardly more than one-half of what they had lost in the form of wages. The illusion of the uninterrupted "progress" of all classes has vanished without a trace. The *relative* decline of the masses' standard of living has been superseded by an *absolute* decline. Workers begin by economizing on skimpy entertainment, then on their clothes and finally on their food. Articles and products of average quality are superseded by shoddy ones, and the shoddy by the worst. Trade unions begin to look like the man who hangs on desperately while going down in a rapidly descending escalator.

With six per cent of the world's population, the United States holds forty per cent of the world's wealth. Still, one-third of the nation, as Roosevelt himself admitted, is undernourished, inadequately clothed, and lives under subhuman conditions. What is there to say, then, for the far less privileged countries? The history of the capitalist world since the last war has irrefutably borne out the so-called "theory of increasing misery." The increase in the social polarity of society is today acknowledged not only by every competent statistician, but even by statesmen who remember the rudimentary rules of arithmetic....

Therefore, to save society, it is not necessary either to check the development of technique, to shut down factories, to award premiums to farmers for sabotaging agriculture, to turn a third of the workers into paupers, or to call upon maniacs to be dictators. Not one of these measures, which are a shocking mockery of the interests of society, are necessary. What is indispensable and urgent is to separate the means of production from their present parasitic owners and to organize society in accordance with a rational plan. Then it would at once be possible really to cure society of its ills. All those able to work would find a job. The work-day would gradually decrease. The wants of all members of society would secure increasing satisfaction. The words "property," "crisis," "exploitation," would drop out of circulation. Mankind would at last cross the threshold into true humanity.

—Leon Trotsky, *Marxism in the United States*,
Workers Party Publications (1947)

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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**No. 985** **2 September 2011**

## Mississippi, U.S.A.

# Lynch Mob Murder of Black Worker

Family Photo

James Craig Anderson

In the early morning hours of June 26, seven white teenagers set out in two vehicles from the nearly all-white town of Brandon, Mississippi, with the expressed intent to find a black man to attack. Exiting the highway in Jackson, the largely black state capital, the racist thugs came upon James Craig Anderson, a 49-year-old black auto worker, in a motel parking lot. The teenagers robbed Anderson and beat him mercilessly, spewing racist epithets and chanting "white power." Not content with this savagery, one of the teenagers, Deryl Dedmon, floored the gas in his Ford pickup truck and drove it over Anderson, killing him instantly. Dedmon boasted to his friends later that morning, "I ran that n----r over!"

This lynching punctured yet again the myth of a racially harmonious "new South" that supposedly sprang from the civil rights reforms of the 1960s. The U.S. Justice Department boasts of laying to rest the "ghosts of Mississippi" by imprisoning a handful of octogenarian KKK killers for a few months before they die. But black oppression and murderous racist violence remain cornerstones of the American capitalist order, North and South.

Shortly after Anderson's killing, Dedmon and one of his cohorts, John Rice, were arrested and charged with murder. Having been subsequently released on bail, Dedmon was returned to custody after police reviewed film taken by a motel surveillance camera overlooking the parking lot that recorded the killing. Rice was released on $5,000 bail and now faces charges only of simple assault. Having by and large kept the horrendous killing under wraps, the capitalist media began to widely report the story only after news of the surveillance film became known.

Attempting to deflect anger over the lynching, Jackson NAACP president Wayne McDaniels declared, "We're concerned about this being a hate crime, but we also need to exert some energy on black on black crime" (*Jackson Advocate*, 30 June)! This is a grotesque echo of the sermonizing of the Jesse Jacksons and Barack Obamas, who essentially blame black people for their own oppression. Sharply exposing the hypocrisy of such "blame the victim" garbage, a posting on the *Voice of Detroit* news Web site noted about the scum who killed Anderson: "To date, the Mayor of Jackson has not attacked the parents or blamed them for not watching their children better! There was no going to church and criticizing all white teens!... There was no telling them they were a disgrace to their race! No teen was told to pull up your pants!"

More than 500 people turned out in Jackson on August 14 to protest the lynching. This was a notable demonstration in the Deep South, which is marked by the legacy of black chattel slavery. That legacy was stamped into the life of James Anderson, a churchgoing man who had a family with his male partner of 17 years. Anderson worked for seven years on the Nissan assembly line in Canton, Mississippi, where the predominantly black workforce makes $4 per hour less than the mainly white workers at Nissan's plant in Smyrna, Tennessee. Deep in the open shop South, these workers have no union. Particularly in the South, the capitalists have historically used racist discrimination, supplemented by official and extralegal terror, to divide the workers and keep unions out. While the AFL-CIO misleaders mouth words about organizing Southern plants, their acceptance of the capitalist profit system and reliance on Democratic Party politicians have led only to defeat for the workers.

Jackson today has a black mayor and black police chief, the county has a black D.A., and a "white power" terrorist has been charged with murder. These things would have been all but unthinkable half a century ago in Jackson, where in 1963 Mississippi NAACP organizer Medgar Evers was assassinated in front of his house, after which his killer ran free for three decades. But putting some black faces in government offices and police posts—or having a black president—does nothing to change the nature of the capitalist state as an apparatus of organized violence to repress the working class and enforce the oppression of black people, immigrants and other minorities. Over the last several decades, black Democratic Party mayors throughout the country have helped enforce the racist oppression against the black masses, acting as overseers for the white capitalist ruling class. There can be no justice for black people in this racist capitalist system!

The social power to smash the racist lynchers lies in the multiracial working class, mobilized independently of and in opposition to the capitalist Republican and Democratic parties. As a key and militant component of the proletariat, black workers will play a leadership role in the fight for a workers government that will finish the Civil War by eradicating exploitation and racial oppression, opening the road to freedom for all mankind. That struggle requires the leadership of a workers party marching under the banner: Black liberation through socialist revolution!■

---

member of the SWP, had made a unique Marxist contribution to the understanding of American black oppression in "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Struggle" (reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5R, "What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism"). Fraser defended the view that the black question was one of racial, not national, oppression. Black people in the U.S. lack any material basis for a separate political economy. Whereas the oppressed nations and nationalities of Europe, for instance, were subjected to forced assimilation, American blacks have faced the opposite: forcible segregation. This understanding mandated a program of revolutionary integrationism as the road to black liberation. Fraser explained:

> "The goals which history has dictated to [black people] are to achieve complete equality through the elimination of racial segregation, discrimination, and prejudice. That is, the overthrow of the race system. It is from these historically conditioned conclusions that the Negro struggle, whatever its forms, has taken the path of the struggle for direct assimilation. All that we can add to this is that these goals cannot be accomplished except through the socialist revolution."

While Fraser agreed in substance with the description of black oppression captured in the term "caste," he rejected the use of this term as applied to the American black population. In this he followed the black sociologist Oliver Cromwell Cox, who in 1948 exposed the use of the term "caste" by racist ideologues who were using it to justify Jim Crow segregation in the South. Despite the terminological difference, we stand on Fraser's contribution that historically the basic thrust of mass black struggle in this country has been for social, economic and political equality and not for separation. While the proletarian vanguard must fight against every manifestation of black oppression, there can be no separate solution to racial oppression short of the united struggle of black and white workers for integration in a socialist society.

Despite the increasing destruction of industrial jobs and erosion of union strength in recent decades, black workers continue to be integrated into strategic, unionized sectors of the industrial proletariat and in the public sector. Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses with the social power of the multiracial proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist party.■


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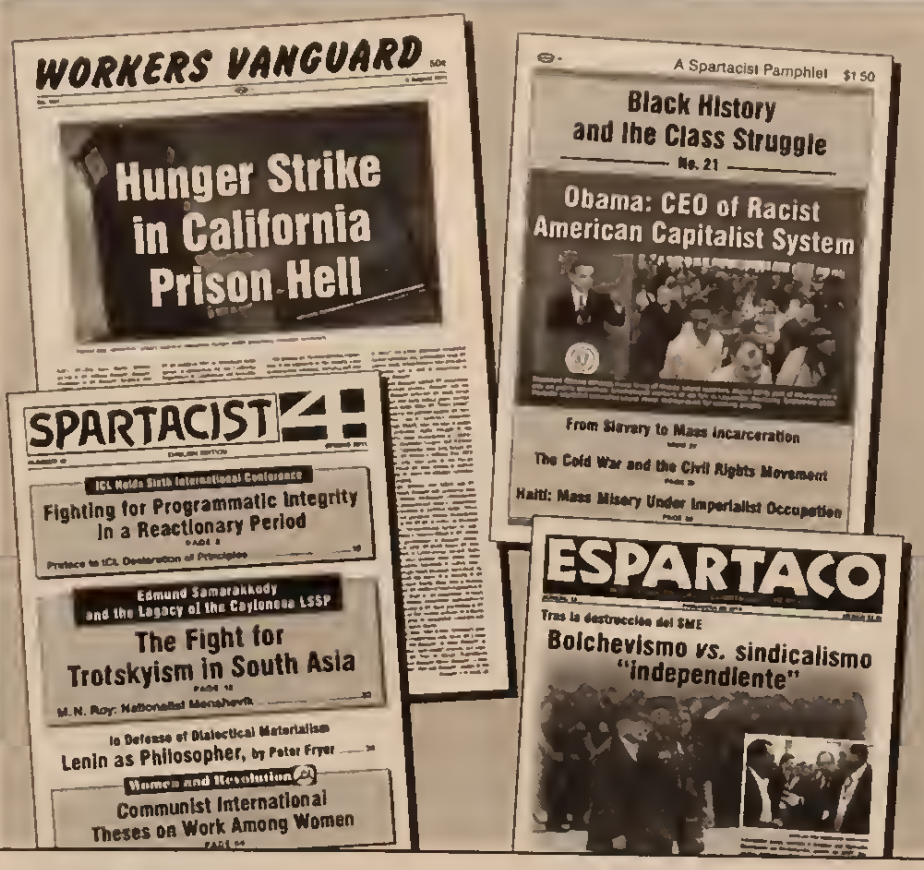


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South Africa

# For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Labor Broker Parasites!

South Africa has been swept by a wave of strikes in recent months in the broadest labor upsurge the country has seen in years. Currently, municipal workers are waging a national strike, while cleaners employed mostly by low-wage contractors known as labor brokers have just settled a three-week strike. Other recently concluded strikes have hit gold and coal mines, paper mills and chemical plants, as well as companies in the steel and engineering sectors. These militant strikes are a gauge of the deep and explosive discontent in a country that has one of the widest disparities in the world between rich and poor. Some 57 percent of South Africans live on less than 325 rand ($47) a month while company executives earn an average of 59 million rand ($8.6 million) a year. The strike wave coincides with ongoing struggles in the townships over lack of "service delivery"—housing, electricity, plumbing, etc.

A common demand of the recent strikes has been for a ban on labor brokers, who pay wages lower than the already miserable norm for super-exploited, mainly black labor. These workers are also deprived of benefits and subject to arbitrary firing. Throughout the capitalist world, the bourgeoisie has increasingly imposed temporary and part-time jobs and other forms of "casualized" labor to attack wages and working conditions.

The following article is reprinted from *Spartacist South Africa* No. 7 (Winter 2011), newspaper of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

AFP

Masi Losi

**Above: Public sector workers march in Cape Town during national strike, August 2010. Below: Cops attack Pretoria-area municipal workers strike rally, March 2011.**

## SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

Labour-broking austerity has increasingly come under the spotlight in neo-apartheid South Africa as the biggest trade-union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and others have raised the demand for banning [labor brokers] in a number of strikes and appeals to the government. For the COSATU leadership, the point of these appeals is to promote illusions in the bourgeois African National Congress (ANC) and the ANC-led capitalist government which the COSATU bureaucracy, as a member of the Tripartite Alliance, is a component part of. They constantly plead that the ANC must crack down on labour brokers in order to carry out the supposed "decent work agenda" set at the ANC's Polokwane Conference in December 2007.

These illusions only serve to undermine the fight against labour-broking slave labour—a fight which must be based on the workers' only effective means of defence against capitalist immiseration: class struggle independent of and against the capitalists, their governments and political parties. It was the Polokwane Conference that elected Jacob Zuma as ANC leader with the strong backing of COSATU, the reformist Stalinist-derived South African Communist Party (SACP) and the openly anti-communist bourgeois-nationalist ANC Youth League of Julius Malema. Since becoming ANC leader, and subsequently president following the April 2009 general elections, Zuma has predictably reneged on the rhetoric of "decent work" and "banning" labour brokers, instead preferring some form of regulation amenable to the bosses.

Capitalists and their governments engage the services of labour brokers as a cost-cutting measure, to maximise their profits. Labour broking and other forms of casualisation serve to undermine trade-union organisation, downgrade general conditions of employment and circumvent labour laws. The bulk of the jobs created in the last few years fall within this ambit of precarious, insecure work with longer hours, unsafe conditions and lower wages. For example, one of the main demands of the recent Food and Allied Workers Union supermarkets strike was higher wages for workers employed by labour brokers, who are paid between R1,800 and R2,500 per month as opposed to the R6,000 wage of permanent workers doing the same job (*Sowetan*, 4 April). This represents a 60 percent wage deficit. Other slave conditions under which these workers toil include non-payment of fringe social security benefits like pension, medical aid, bonuses, annual leave, sick pay, injury at work and so forth.

Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), stands for smashing the parasitic labour-broker middlemen through ***class-struggle means***. We fight for trade-union control of hiring and upgrading. Under capitalism, this is the only way to undercut the employers' efforts to manipulate hiring as a tool to divide the working class along racial, ethnic, national and religious lines, or as a means of screening out pro-union militants. Only through the trade unions and other organisations of the working class is it possible to fight for fair, equitable and objective criteria for recruitment of new workers and combat discrimination and persecution.

These demands must be included as part of the struggle with the bosses over the terms of employment, and linked to a political fight against the pro-capitalist, nationalist politics of the current trade-union misleaders. A class-struggle leadership must be forged to mobilise the unions' power in a broader struggle against capitalist misery, uniting workers, unemployed and other oppressed layers against the common enemy—to organise the unorganised; defend immigrants, women workers and other more vulnerable sections of the working class; and fight the mass unemployment among especially black youth through a programme of jobs for all by dividing the available work among all labourers with no loss in pay. This all poses the question of the need for the working class to struggle for power.

### Parasitic Middlemen

Labour broking is the practice of using employees supplied by a third-party company (the labour broker). Labour brokers sell their services to a client company which pays the broker for their labour needs. The labour broker pays the worker a meagre, unliveable fraction of the cost of labour that the worker provides to the client and then pockets the rest. The worker does not take part in the contract governing the terms of the labour he supplies.

The generally low levels of wages for South African workers are central to the super-exploitation of (mainly black) labour which colonialism and apartheid perfected and post-1994 neo-apartheid capitalism preserved. This means most workers can only make major purchases like housing, furniture or even decent schooling for their children through credit, by using their retirement benefits as collateral or by forming revolving credit schemes (*stokvels*) with fellow employees. Mandla Simelane, for example, is a machine operator at Transnet [national shipping and freight company] who makes R3,500 per month and hasn't had an increase in his real income for seven years. He cannot use his medical aid scheme in private hospitals—conditions in public hospitals are appalling—nor can he access loans for housing. Thirteen percent of his wages goes to transport and he cannot support his wife and two kids with the remainder. As he explains it: "So I must rent my whole life...my life is for rent. I live in a cycle of debt. I cannot come off debt because I simply cannot afford simple living expenses on this salary. I live on loan sharks and they live on me. This is the life Transnet wants for all of us" (*South African Labour Bulletin*, August/September 2010).

The mechanisms for coping with low wages all require permanent employment, and so they are beyond reach for workers employed by labour brokers and other casual workers, forcing them to live from hand to mouth. The same issue of *South African Labour Bulletin* reported on the case of a Transnet worker who has been there for over 30 years, on "temporary" contract terms for the last 20, and making only R2,000 per month after deductions! Transnet is one of the "parastatals" managed by the ANC/Alliance government.

Labour brokers are used to undermine trade-union organisation and reverse previous gains. In some instances companies have retrenched [laid off] whole departments and rehired the same workers under labour brokers with less pay and fewer benefits. By using labour brokers, the bosses can get a legal cover to avoid being held accountable for conditions of employment. This nullifies the collective bargaining rights which organised work-

ers sacrificed so much to achieve as part of the struggle for trade-union recognition under apartheid repression. The central factor that makes it difficult to organise casual workers into trade unions is the lack of job security. Brokers can easily replace workers who join trade unions. As another attack on trade unions, labour brokers are used to provide scab labour during strikes.

Employment benefits and other working-class gains under capitalism are wrested and defended through class struggle, not some chamber bargaining or treacherous so-called "social contract" with the capitalists and their government. An example of the latter is the participation of COSATU and other trade unions in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), an institutionalised class-collaborationist structure involving trade unions, the capitalists and their government. NEDLAC is tasked with negotiating a deal to inform the pending legislation to either regulate or ban labour brokers. We are opposed to such sell-out "partnerships" with the capitalist enemy class. The idea that what is good for the capitalists is good for the workers, or that the bosses' government can be pressured to serve the interests of the exploited, is a lie promoted by the trade-union bureaucracy to amnesty their betrayals and sabotage of working-class struggle. Workers need to understand that any gains they make face continual attacks under capitalism and can only be guaranteed by overthrowing the whole system based on production for profits through the exploitation of labour. A planned socialist economy, based on working-class state power, must be constructed on the ruins of the decaying capitalist system.

It is critical for full-time, unionised workers to fight for the more vulnerable casual employees to gain permanent employment at the same conditions and benefits as a measure of self-defence and class solidarity. The fight to defend brokered workers should be tied to a struggle to organise the unorganised and to defend immigrant workers and others of the most oppressed layers in the working class, who are disproportionately forced into casual jobs.

A series of striking workers have won gains for temporary workers in class battles against the capitalists and their government. An important victory in the fight against labour brokers was won by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) auto strike in August 2010 against the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organisation (AMEO). AMEO was forced to agree to stop the use of labour brokers from January 2011 while allowing existing contracts to run their course. Similar gains were also won by NUMSA strikes on behalf of casual workers in the motor sector (which includes component manufacturers, petrol station attendants, panel beaters [body shop mechanics] and other workshop workers). These gains include payment of minimum rates in the industry, social security benefits like retirement, death, disability and medical aid. However, at these companies NUMSA members only managed to have employers agree to the gradual phasing out of the labour brokers.

Friends of *Spartacist South Africa* and *Workers Vanguard* in the industry reported that employers in the motor sector have since tried to renege on phasing out labour brokers and hiring casual workers on a permanent basis. Instead of mobilising the social power of the union members which won this concession to begin with, the NUMSA bureaucrats have taken the matter to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). This slavish dependence on the bosses' courts is a cowardly diversion from class struggle which demoralises the workers and paves the way for defeats. The only language the capitalists understand is the one that hits their profits.

It is not in the interests of workers employed in the auto industry to be divided into separate, therefore weaker bargaining units (auto for car manufacturers; motor sector for component manufacturers and others; rubber for tyre manufacturers). These divisions only serve to undermine the collective strength of these workers. When the component manufacturers were on strike in September 2010, for example, auto workers belonging to the same union had to be sent home because they could not work without components, when in fact all should have gone out together in the same strike. The tyre and rubber strike from 30 August 2010 had the same potential of stopping car manufacturing.

We stand for *industrial unionism*, which means that all workers in the same industry should belong to one union and be covered by the same collective bargaining unit. Workers in the same industry are also divided up into different unions organised by different federations according to political affiliation. There should be one union per industry regardless of the political affiliations. The strength of the working class is in their numbers, organisation and discipline.

In May 2010 the Transnet strike by the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (affiliated to COSATU) and the United Transport and Allied Trade Union (affiliated to the Federation of Unions of South Africa) brought both exports and imports to a grinding halt. This strike won permanent jobs for some 1,000 of the more than 5,000 contract workers at Transnet. During this strike workers were wary of their sell-out leaders, warning: "The strike is ours, not our leaders. They give us feedback after negotiations and if we reject it they must go back. The leaders don't get to decide, we do" (*South African Labour Bulletin*, August/September 2010). While this is an expression of the union membership's genuine mistrust of their leaders, what is decisive is an organised political opposition to the union tops' class-collaborationist reliance on the bourgeois state and its politicians.

A class-struggle-based fight to smash labour broking is counterposed to, and not complementary to, the reliance on the capitalist state pushed by the pro-capitalist COSATU leadership. The union members who demand the banning of labour brokers in their strikes—strikes forced on the union leaders against their will—are fighting for their elementary class interests against a concerted capitalist ruling-class assault. The reformist COSATU leadership is a component of the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance government whose job is to uphold the rule and profits of those bosses against the workers. [COSATU head Zwelinzima] Vavi and Co.'s pleas to the anti-working-class Zuma government to implement legislation banning labour brokers are meant to retain their role as loyal (if occasionally "critical") partners in class collaboration, to more effectively control and sell out their working-class base.

The COSATU tops push the utopian notion that the government can be persuaded to act in the interests of the workers instead of the capitalists. This lie is based on a wrong and reformist view of the bourgeois state—a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole capitalist class—as a neutral arbiter between the historically irreconcilable interests of the working class and their bourgeois exploiters. The Namibian case is an example of the futility of reliance on the bourgeois state, showing once again that all bourgeois reforms are easily reversible. The Namibian government passed a new Labour Act in 2007 that banned the practice of labour broking. When a labour broker company challenged this provision in the High Court, the court first upheld it, before, in December 2009, the Namibian Supreme Court overturned the ban on labour brokers. Its justification was that the ban violated the constitutional right to "practise any profession, or carry on any occupation, trade or business"—for the capitalists and their state, the bottom line is the "right" of capital to exploit labour.

The COSATU bureaucracy has in the past used the same con game of betraying legitimate working-class struggles by channelling them into appeals to the ANC-led capitalist government. Examples of this include demands by the majority black working class to close the apartheid wage gap; opposition to the neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policies adopted by the ANC government in 1996, which led to privatisations and retrenchments. During the 2007 and 2010 public sector strikes, the COSATU leaders initially promised to call secondary solidarity strikes by the strategic mining, industrial and commercial trade unions, which have the social power to shut down the economy and stop the capitalists' profits. But both times they cancelled these solidarity strikes.

Their threats to call a general strike against labour brokers have remained just that—an empty threat—as the COSATU leaders were more concerned with ensuring ANC victory in the local government elections. In another recent act of class treason in the service of the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance, the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) bureaucracy suspended a threatened 13 May national strike by their 220,000-members-strong union to avoid embarrassing the ANC five days before the 18 May local elections. In the eyes of the COSATU bureaucracy, the workers are voting cows for the ANC's chronically corrupt (like any capitalist government) black elite gravy trainers. Even when they do happen to call such token actions, their aim is not to fight to win but to blow off steam from their angry and restless base. Instead of opposing attacks on their members, their main complaint is usually about not being "consulted" by their Alliance partners.

*continued on page 6*

AP

**Zimbabweans in De Doorns, Western Cape, driven from their homes by anti-immigrant attacks targeting farm workers, November 2009.**

Leon Nicholas

**August 2010: Workers demanding pay raise demonstrate at Johannesburg headquarters of Transnet shipping company.**

**Just Out!**

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Government Unleashes Cop Terror on Unions
Township Poor, Immigrants
Break with the Bourgeois Tripartite Alliance!

# South Africa...

*(continued from page 5)*

The hypocrisy of calling on this state to ban labour brokers is underlined by the fact that the Zuma government is one of the biggest users of labour brokers in the country. Top ANC honchos—such as president Zuma's son Duduzane; former economic adviser in the presidency and prominent ANC member Moss Ngoasheng; and former public service director general Robinson Ramaite; amongst others—make profits as owners of or shareholders in labour-broking companies. Meanwhile, while occasionally talking tough about the need for an all-out ban, Vavi and other union leaders have repeatedly indicated their willingness to compromise and accept some kind of "regulation" of the labour-broker bloodsuckers.

South Africa is one of the countries with the highest unemployment rates in the world, and this is not because of this or that government policy that can be changed through pressure. Well over a century ago, Karl Marx described in *Capital* how the maintenance of the "industrial reserve army" of unemployed was an integral part of capitalism, serving to degrade working conditions and to lower wages for all workers. As Marx explained:

> "The over-work of the employed part of the working-class swells the ranks of the reserve, whilst conversely the greater pressure that the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to over-work and to subjugation under the dictates of capital. The condemnation of one part of the working-class to enforced idleness by the over-work of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists."

Eric Miller

**Launching of COSATU trade-union federation in Western Cape, March 1986.**

Beukes/SAPA

**Communist Party leader Blade Nzimande (left) with South African president Jacob Zuma at COSATU national congress, September 2009.**

## Defend Immigrant Workers!

The use of labour brokers overlaps with labour practices that border on outright criminality by the racist (and still overwhelmingly white) South African bosses. While a norm against blacks under apartheid, since 1994 these have disproportionately hit immigrant workers. There are commonly reported cases of employers, especially in the farms, employing workers escaping poverty and other life-threatening situations in neighbouring countries, only to call the police to arrest and summarily deport them when pay day arrives. They are sometimes paid in food rations instead of money. Their wages are always much lower than local workers.

A study by researcher Jean Pierre Misago of the University of the Witwatersrand's Forced Migration Studies Programme found that labour brokers may have been directly responsible for inciting the November 2009 anti-immigrant attacks at De Dooms in the Western Cape. Both South African and Zimbabwean contractors (brokers) were supplying local farmers with workers. South African contractors complained of income losses due to competition from their Zimbabwean counterparts. They pressured local ANC leaders and incited local residents to attack and chase Zimbabweans away.

The COSATU tops' promotion of "Buy South African" protectionism fuels anti-immigrant poison and perpetuates the lie that South African workers share common interests with their country's capitalist exploiters. This is bourgeois-nationalist poison that needs to be rooted out of the labour movement if the working class is to be able to fight, not only as a class in itself, but as a class for itself conscious of its historical task as the gravedigger of capitalist wage slavery.

An article in the May-July 2010 issue of the Democratic Socialist Movement's (DSM) paper *Izwi Labasebenzi* (Xhosa/Zulu for Workers Voice) exposes the parasitic nature of the labour-broking bloodsuckers and criticises the COSATU tops' "posturing." But it is notable (and not surprising) that they don't say ***a single word*** about the need to organise the largely unorganised casual workers and defend immigrants. The DSM and its international collaborators of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) are notorious for adapting to backward consciousness. They have repeatedly supported "strikes" by cops, prison guards and other armed thugs of the capitalist state, who they consider "workers in uniform." For years the DSM was buried inside the bourgeois-nationalist ANC, before more recently leaving the ANC to tail after the nationalists of the Pan Africanist Congress. The DSM reformists' current calls to "break" the Tripartite Alliance and form a "new workers' party" are not about fighting for the independent class interests of the proletariat. They are aimed at forming a "new" reformist party, which would just continue the working class's subordination to nationalism and the racist capitalist state under a new label.

In early 2009 the CWI's leading section, Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party in Britain, scandalously supported the wave of virulently chauvinist strikes which swept construction sites at Britain's oil refineries and power plants. The strikes covered themselves in the bloody Union Jack and demanded "British jobs for British workers," a slogan long associated with the fascists. The CWI whitewashed these reactionary mobilisations, lyingly claiming that they were not anti-immigrant, and a Socialist Party supporter even played a key role in the strike committee at the Lindsey refinery! (See "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 930, 13 February 2009.)

As experience proves, labour brokers attack both local and foreign workers, thereby providing a strong objective need for united class struggle against the common capitalist enemies. Local workers must recruit immigrants to their unions with the same rights and working conditions as the only way to combat the employers' divide-and-rule schemes. For instance, the National Union of Mineworkers—COSATU's biggest affiliate—has a membership reflecting the heavy concentration of immigrant workers in that strategic industry. This is despite the ANC-led government's 2003 Immigration Act prohibiting employment of "novice" immigrants in the mines, which has limited the number of immigrant workers entering this industry. Foreign workers bring rich struggle traditions from their own countries to supplement those of their local comrades. South African workers should demand ***full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*** We fight for the working class to take up this demand as part of our perspective of fighting for a ***socialist federation of Southern Africa*** extending beyond and against the existing colonialist-imposed borders, which have no national legitimacy for the African peoples who were colonised.

Reuters

**March 2010: Township residents outside Pretoria protest miserable housing, lack of rail services.**

## Intensified Exploitation in the Post-Soviet World

The increased use of labour brokers is part of a broad range of increased austerity measures—including wholesale privatisations of public enterprises, retrenchments, outsourcing, two-tier wage schemes, short time and other attacks on labour—which have been aggressively pursued by the international capitalist rulers especially in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. In the western European imperialist countries such attacks have seen the dismantling of the social welfare state, as the bourgeoisies of these countries see no need to continue paying for these concessions to the working class of their own countries. This increased exploitation allowed the capitalists to heap up enormous profits, squeezed from the blood of the working class and the poor. This is one reason, among many others, why we say the capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union represented a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat.

In South Africa, the fall of the Soviet Union—which had provided the main financial, military and diplomatic aid to the ANC/SACP-led anti-apartheid forces—created the conditions for the negotiated settlement with the white rulers. Concluding in 1994, this sell-out deal was a betrayal of black freedom which led to the establishment of the neo-apartheid order. The ANC/SACP/COSATU Tripartite Alliance regime was put in power (at first in a short-lived coalition with their erstwhile jailors from the white-supremacist National Party) to defend the interests of the still dominantly white capitalist class against the majority black poor masses.

The use of contract labour and temporary employees in this country proliferated with the passing of the Labour Relations Act of 1995 by the Alliance government. The COSATU leaders were part of the negotiation process that passed this legislation which, for the first time, recognised labour brokers as employers of the workers they hire on behalf of the so-called "client" companies.

Adding insult to injury, the government is now pursuing the so-called youth unemployment wage subsidy, which would further segment the labour market by replacing older permanent employees with even more poorly paid and super-exploited young workers with no rights. In the last decades, we have seen fierce battles fought by youths and workers against similar attacks. For example, in 2006 French youth went into the streets to protest the CPE law aimed at slashing wages and job security for youths, getting support from a series of one-day general strikes by the main union federations. In 1999 Mexican students at UNAM university, mainly from working-class backgrounds, fought a protracted and bruising battle against the assault by the country's capitalist rulers on their right to education.

## Build a Revolutionary Party to Fight for a Workers Government

For the black majority the apartheid state was like a giant labour broker responsible for miserable working and living conditions characterised by slave wages; migrant labour from Bantustans and neighbouring countries living in single-sex hostel dwellings barely fit for animals; pass laws for black urban influx control; denial of trade-union and political rights; etc. The introduction of labour broking and other increased casualisation coincided with increased expectations for social justice and redress amongst the poor majority following the end of white minority political rule. But since taking power 17 years ago, the capitalist government of the ANC/SACP/COSATU Alliance has single-mindedly pursued policies of social decay for the majority of the population. The occasional criticisms by

## With Company Out for Blood

# Union Tops Call Off Verizon Strike

After 15 days on strike at Verizon locations from Massachusetts to Virginia, some 45,000 members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) were sent back to work by union officials on August 22 without a new contract. The work stoppage—the largest in the U.S. since the 2007 General Motors strike—pitted repair technicians, FiOS installers and call-center workers against a telecom giant out to squeeze them for $1 billion a year in concessions: health care, pensions, work rules, job security, sick leave, even the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

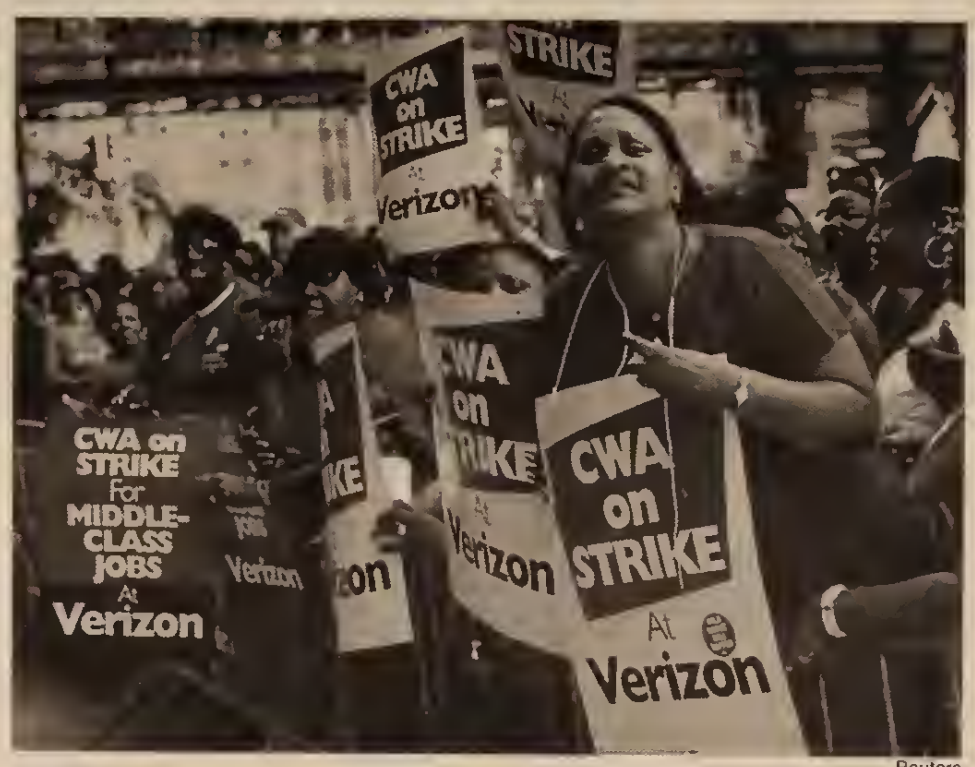
Union workers showed their determination and readiness to fight, dogging scab installers and bosses masquerading as repair techs on their rounds. But just as installation and repair orders were beginning to pile up, the CWA and IBEW tops capitulated and called off the strike after buying Verizon's empty promise that it would negotiate seriously—even though the company had not backed down on any of the issues in dispute.

In the midst of the strike, Verizon, which has made $19 billion in profits over the last four years alone, put out an ad sneering, "They claim we want to strip away 50 years of contract negotiations. THEY'RE RIGHT." The company prepared for a showdown months in advance, including plans to fly in large numbers of management scabs. With Verizon out for blood, the CWA/IBEW bureaucrats, who were backed into a fight they did not want, folded at the first opportunity, to the bitter frustration of many workers.

For years, Verizon has maneuvered to isolate and weaken the CWA and IBEW. Mergers, acquisitions and the sales of operations, together with jobs lost to attrition and technological advances, have reduced the unionized workforce to 30 percent of the company, concentrated in FiOS fiber-optic and traditional copper landline services. A key reason the courts deregulated the old AT&T monopoly some three decades ago was to dismember its unionized workforce and open the door to non-union outfits. In recent years, Verizon's non-union workforce has mushroomed, with over 83,000 in the Wireless division alone. The CWA and IBEW tops have relied on empty contractual promises from management, especially a "neutrality" clause supposedly assuring company non-interference in unionization efforts. Having agreed to "neutrality" in a 2000 strike settlement, Verizon has systematically harassed union supporters and closed union shops.

Failing to organize the legion of non-union workers in Verizon's highly profitable Wireless division, the union bureaucrats during the strike mustered token pickets at Wireless stores. These pickets did not appeal to Wireless workers to join the strike but were aimed instead at mobilizing "public opinion" against the company. Even so, the CWA reported a flurry of calls from non-union workers wanting to join the union. There needs to be a ***class-struggle fight*** to ***organize the unorganized***. Labor's power resides in its collective organization and ability to cut off the flow of profits. The unions can defend themselves only by using their own weapons: mass picket lines, international labor solidarity actions, labor-based mobilizations for health care and other necessities.

Like all labor struggles, the Verizon strike laid bare the class line dividing society: the workers who are forced to sell their labor power in order to survive and the capitalists who reap fabulous profits from exploiting that labor. The CWA and IBEW misleaders undermined the strike by bowing to court injunctions limiting pickets and appealing to the false "friends" of labor in the capitalist Democratic Party to pressure Verizon management. Throughout the strike, the CWA/IBEW tops pitched the battle as a fight for "middle-class jobs," obscuring the class line between labor and capital. What does a striking worker have in common with a middle-class management scab!




Reuters

**NYC: Strikers outside Verizon headquarters, August 8.**

The AFL-CIO bureaucracy has long peddled the lie that any worker with a decent union wage is "middle class." Now they're really pushing it as Democratic Party politicians from the White House on down prate about saving "middle-class jobs" in the run-up to the 2012 elections. Even as the AFL-CIO gears up to re-elect Barack Obama, the White House is pushing for trillions in cuts to social programs for working people and the poor. Obama's health care "reform" last year, with its taxes on "Cadillac" health plans held by union workers, meant that companies like Verizon would try to saddle their workers with the added costs. The Democratic Party accepts the unions' money and staffers for its election campaigns. But the Democrats represent the capitalist class no less than the Republicans. They made this clear yet again during the strike when the Obama administration launched an FBI investigation against supposed "sabotage" of Verizon property by union members.

With scab management cars clipping and injuring union members on the picket lines, police—including special "anti-terror" units in New York City—escorted strikebreakers into work and arrested striking workers. The cops, embraced by the labor bureaucracy as "fellow unionists," have no place in the labor movement! Verizon has issued over 100 disciplinary letters against strikers, barring them from returning to their jobs. All labor must demand: Drop all the charges! No reprisals—full amnesty for all strikers!

Faced with the outsourcing of call-center and troubleshooting jobs to the Philippines, Mexico and India, union officials pushed appeals to Verizon "to create good, American jobs." Fact: Verizon's strikebreaking efforts were "Made in the U.S.A." The scabs crossing the picket lines on the Atlantic seaboard were "fellow Americans." There is no question that Verizon and other corporations have used outsourcing as a way to weaken or bust the unions. But the answer is not the labor bureaucracy's class-collaborationist chauvinism, which poisons workers' consciousness by promoting the lie that workers in the U.S. share common interests with their red-white-and-blue exploiters. In February 2010, a call by the CWA for "California work for California workers" took on a chauvinist cast as work shifted across the border to Mexico. A class-struggle labor leadership would support workers' struggles internationally to organize into unions against the capitalists, of all flags.

Crass flag-waving is hardly surprising coming from the CWA bureaucracy, which has long embraced the aims of U.S. imperialism. In particular, the CWA tops ran point for the imperialists in the Cold War against the Soviet Union by sponsoring and braintrusting the American Institute for Free Labor Development, which worked with the CIA to destroy militant, left-led unions, especially in Latin America.

As we wrote eight years ago, when Verizon workers were facing the exact same issues as today:

> "Labor needs a leadership that understands that the 'partnership' of labor and capital is a lie, that stands for the complete independence of the working class from the capitalists' government and political parties. Forging such a leadership through sharp class struggle will be a crucial step in building a workers party that fights for a workers government, which would expropriate the capitalist class and build a planned economy. When those who labor rule, technological advances would not mean workers being thrown onto the scrap heap but would mean reduced workdays, better working conditions and more leisure, and the wealth of society would be used for the benefit of all."
>
> —"Verizon: For a Solid Strike to Stop Union-Busting!" *WV* No. 807, 1 August 2003 ■

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COSATU and to a lesser extent the SACP are only aimed at covering up their complicity and keeping disaffected workers within the political fold of bourgeois nationalism. ***Break with the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance!***

Immiseration of the working class is inherent in capitalism, especially in its epoch of imperialist decay. Prior to 1994, there is a very rich history of class struggle, mainly by COSATU unions, against casualisation. These included fighting to ban overtime work, the fight for a 40-hour working week without loss of pay and a demand to make all casual workers full-time after three months of continued employment.

But the growing social and political power of COSATU following its founding in the 1980s was paralysed by its increasing political subordination to the ANC. In the absence of the intervention by a Leninist-Trotskyist party armed with a programme for proletarian power, none of the political currents within COSATU, including the so-called "workerist" opposition, were able to make the leap to a perspective of struggling for proletarian leadership of the anti-apartheid struggle. By the time of the 1994 sell-out deal, the COSATU bureaucracy was integrated into the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance and jumped at the opportunity to join the capitalist government, sending 20 of their leaders into parliament under the ticket of the ANC. This further cemented the subordination of the working class to bourgeois nationalism.

Workers must refuse to pay for the economic crisis of the capitalist system of their exploiters. In the fight for employment and decent living standards for all, a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class should put forward a set of transitional demands to provide a bridge from the current struggles and consciousness to the fight for workers power. Such demands were formulated by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, in the 1938 Transitional Programme—the founding document of the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

Trade unions and other mass working-class organisations should fight for a ***sliding scale of wages***. "This means that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in prices of the consumer goods," wrote Trotsky. In the fight against unemployment, working-class organisations should fight for a ***sliding scale of working hours***, demanding the division of available work amongst available labour without loss of pay. These demands should lead to only one revolutionary conclusion, in Trotsky's words: "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

This is the only programme that can guide the fight for a class-struggle leadership in the unions. This task is inextricably linked to the struggle for a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party—the instrument needed to lead the proletariat to victory in a socialist revolution. Such a party must be forged in political combat against reformist organisations like the SACP, fighting to win class-conscious militants from the working class base of these organisations to a genuine communist programme. A revolutionary vanguard party must take its cue from the words of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in their March 1850 "Address of the Central Authority to the [Communist] League":

> "For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of the existing society but the foundation of a new one." ■

# Young Spartacus

## 140TH ANNIVERSARY

# LESSONS OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

*As part of the training of young revolutionaries, the Sportocus Youth Clubs strive to critically leorn from past victories ond defeats of the working class. The Paris Commune of 1871 is nearly peerless in the lessons it has for revolutionary Marxists. We print below a slightly edited closs on the Commune given by S. Williams, a member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist Leogue, to the New York SYC.*

Musée Carnavalet

**Women on barricades during Paris Commune.**

*PART ONE*

140 years ago, on 18 March 1871, the working class of Paris rose up and established its own, short-lived workers state in one city. Although much of the capitalist government and army had already fled Paris, the workers swept away what remained and they began to rule. This lasted only for some weeks, until late May 1871. The Commune was the first taste of what Engels, in his 1891 introduction to Marx's *The Civil Wor in France,* called the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Lenin closely studied the Commune: He edited and put out the second edition of *The Civil War in France* in Russian. He drew on the lessons of the Commune in *The State ond Revolution*, written in the run-up to the October Revolution of 1917, and in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegode Kautsky*, written after the revolution. Like Lenin, we must gain a critical understanding that, unlike the victorious Russian Revolution, the Commune had no effective leadership and ended in slaughter.

### Background to the Commune

The idea of a "commune" dates to the Middle Ages. During feudal times, as cities grew into centers of exchange, city dwellers (e.g., artisans, merchants, and the growing bourgeoisie) would sometimes seek a charter for freedom from feudal trihute, which allowed them to have a kind of autonomous city government "in common" (or a *commune* in French). Later, during the bourgeois French Revolution, a "commune" arose in Paris between 1792-93. It was the base of support for the most radical Jacobin, Maximilien Robespierre, and was called the "Insurrectionary Commune." It supported universal male suffrage and was based on the city's armed citizens. In 1871, workers looked back at these earlier examples as models. In *The Civil Wor in France*, Marx wrote, "It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks the modern State power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the mediaeval Communes." The 1871 Commune was new because of its revolutionary ***proletarian*** nature.

To understand the figures who played a role in relation to the Paris Commune, we must first look at earlier revolutions, in 1848, when uprisings against monarchic and feudal reaction swept across continental Europe. In France, a monarch named Louis-Philippe d'Orleans had ruled in the interest of the financial and industrial capitalists since 1830. In February of 1848, there was a mass uprising against this Orleanist monarchy, which was overthrown and a bourgeois Provisional Government, including a few representatives of the socialists and workers, took power. Under pressure from the workers, the Provisional Government instituted something called National Workshops that were a kind of make-work/welfare for the Parisian unemployed. The main leftist opposition to the Provisional Government was led by Auguste Blanqui, whose supporters later played a role in the Commune. In April of 1848, the Provisional Government held elections to a Constituent Assembly (which Blanqui opposed). The majority of the French population, the reactionary peasantry, mainly voted for a right-wing coalition of bourgeois-supported monarchists called the Party of Order. One of its leaders was a man named Adolphe Thiers, who was later the butcher of the Commune. In June of 1848, the democratically elected Constituent Assembly declared that the national workshops would be abolished, leading to a workers uprising in Paris. In a foretaste of what would happen with the defeat of the Commune, the June 1848 workers uprising was brutally suppressed by the Assembly and thousands of workers and oppressed were killed.

Not just in France, hut across Europe, the working class emerged as an independent class force in 1848, and the bourgeoisie showed that it had become counterrevolutionary as a class. In previous centuries, during the great bourgeois revolutions, the bourgeoisie had ***overthrown*** feudal monarchies. But in 1848 they ***allied*** with reactionary feudal elements to crush the workers. Prior to 1848, Marx and Engels—who later participated in the 1848 revolutions—had envisioned the possibility of the proletarian party allying itself with a bourgeois republican opposition in the course of a bourgeois-democratic revolution (at least in France and Germany). However, in drawing the lessons of 1848, Marx and Engels emphasized in their famous 1850 address that the workers party had to act independently of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, and they made their point that for a workers party the "battle cry must be: The Revolution in Permanence."

Just prior to 1848, Marx and Engels had been instrumental in forming an organization called the Communist League, which was a small group of communist revolutionists whose program was the *Communist Manifesto*. But a few years after the 1848 revolutions, the Communist League fell apart. By the time of the Commune in 1871, Marx and Engels were leaders of what was called the International Working Men's Association, or the First International, which had formed in 1864, reflecting the reactivation of the workers movement in Europe after its defeat in the 1848 revolutions. Unlike the cadre organization of the Communist League, the First International was made up of many ideological currents, both revolutionary and petty-bourgeois. The ideology of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was very strong in the French branch of the International. He was an ideological father of anarchism—a petty-bourgeois ideology reflecting the interests of small artisans and not the industrial proletariat. The Proudhonists were "mutualists" who didn't believe in strike action or participation in "political" struggle. They thought society should be made up of small property holders, and they fought for "Mutual Aid Societies" to provide cheap or free credit, viewing "economic struggle" as their weapon. Blanqui (who did not join the International) was also very influential in the French workers movement. Engels called him a "revolutionary of the old generation" because his ideology had its origins with the radical Jacobin communists from after the French Revolution of 1789. Blanqui believed in the politics of secret conspiracy, i.e., organizing a small minority through secret cells that would then spring up and try to make a revolution through an armed uprising. Blanqui (with about a thousand others) tried this in 1839. The predictable result was that they and others went straight to prison.

no credit

**Auguste Blanqui**

The First International also included

International Institute of Social History (inset), Dietz Verlag Berlin

**As a young revolutionary, Friedrich Engels (inset) participated in uprising of workers and artisans at Elberfeld, Germany, in May 1849.**

some English trade unionists. Unlike elsewhere in Europe, the trade unions were a mass movement in England, albeit with bourgeois-democratic politics. In the International, there were also some German former members of the Communist League and an eclectic mix of others, including some Italians and Poles. Mikhail Bakunin, the anarchist, allied with the First International in 1868-69, although at the same time he secretly kept up his own parallel organization, the International Social-Democratic Alliance, which was a source of constant tension with Marx and Engels. The Bakuninists, like the Proudhonists, looked toward the petty bourgeoisie as the source for social change, not the working class. Bakunin believed that the bourgeois state could simply be abolished, and he opposed the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat as well as any "authority." As Engels later put it, for Bakunin "authority = the state = evil in the absolute." Like Proudhon, Bakunin rejected "political struggle" in favor of "economic struggle." To learn more about these questions: Joseph Seymour wrote a terrific series on the early communists and the 1848 revolutions in *Young Spartacus* (1976-1979), called "Marxism and the Jacobin Communist Tradition." Also, the Spartacist pamphlet *Marxism vs. Anarchism* has nice details about Proudhon and Bakunin.

## Paris and Industrial Development

In the period after the 1848 workers uprising, the industrial proletariat grew quickly in Western Europe through the growth of industry itself: In the 20 years between the defeat of 1848 and the Commune, industrial production and foreign trade in France doubled. In 1840 there were very few rail lines outside of Britain and the U.S., but by 1870 there were about 11,000 miles of rail in France, thousands of miles of telegraph lines, and industrial shipbuilding had massively expanded. Gold flowed into Europe from the California gold rush. Finance capital grew with the founding of giant French banks like Crédit Lyonnais and Crédit Foncier, which financed the massive industrial expansion and huge building projects.

Although the character of the Parisian working class remained largely artisan or organized in small workshops (one reason Proudhon had such influence), the growth of a significant industrial proletariat in France (to a small extent in Paris) was a change relative to the time before 1848, when Marx and Engels thought that the proletariat, particularly of France and Germany, needed more time to develop economically as a class. As Engels noted in his introduction to Marx's *The Civil War in France*: By 1871, large-scale industry had already "ceased to be an exceptional case even in Paris, the centre of artistic handicrafts," and Marx "quite rightly says" that the civil war "must necessarily have led in the end to communism, that is to say, the direct opposite of the Proudhon doctrine."

Corresponding to this industrial growth, the urban population expanded quickly. The population of Paris more than doubled between 1831 and 1872. In the 20 years before the Commune, a government official named Baron Haussmann carried out a massive urban project in Paris. Prior to Haussmann, much of Paris did not appear as it does today, but rather resembled most medieval cities: tiny alleyways, uneven houses crammed together in the city center, poorly-lit streets that were dirty and crime-ridden, and the working-class and plebeian population was afflicted by all sorts of diseases. The "respectable" middle class was terrified of the city center, which was also the historic center of revolt against the ruling class. Haussmann razed this part of the city, replacing it with "Grand Boulevards" that were wide, with large intersections at angles that would make it easier to move troops and suppress barricades. Haussmann himself said, "We ripped open the belly of old Paris, the neighbourhood of revolt and barricades, and cut a large opening through the almost impenetrable maze of alleys, piece by piece...." The workers were pushed out of the city center and into the hills of the city, like Belleville and Montmartre, which later became the stronghold of the Commune.

E. Schaumann

**Founding of First International, 1864. Workers of the world, unite!**

## The Franco-Prussian War

The event that precipitated the formation of the Paris Commune was the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. During most of the 19th century, Germany was not a unified country. In the 1848 revolution, Marx and other socialists fought for the unification of Germany. However, when the German bourgeoisie allied with feudal reaction in 1848, the outcome was that there remained many small German-speaking states, some of which were dominated by local nobility and some of which were under foreign control. The strongest German state was Prussia, ruled by the Hohenzollern monarchy. In the mid 1860s, under King Wilhelm I, a strong German chancellor named Otto von Bismarck emerged. Fighting against Denmark and Austria (successively) for control of German-speaking provinces, Bismarck accelerated a process of German unification embodied in the founding of the North German Confederation in 1867. To complete German unification, Bismarck had to challenge French domination to the west: He essentially provoked Napoléon III into declaring war against Prussia by threatening to put a king from the Prussian nobility on the Spanish throne. (France would have been surrounded by pro-Prussian regimes.)

Louis Napoléon (the nephew of the first Napoléon) came to power as a result of the crushing of the French proletarian uprising in June 1848. He had been president of the Republic from 1848 to 1851, but he carried out a coup and abolished the National Assembly in December of 1851. A year later, he declared the Second Empire, crowning himself Emperor Napoléon III. In reference to the two Napoléons in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx derisively wrote: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce."

On 19 July 1870, Napoléon III declared war on Prussia and the Franco-Prussian War began. In a declaration on the war, Marx's "First Address on the Franco-Prussian War" (19-23 July 1870), the International sided militarily with Germany from a revolutionary-internationalist standpoint. He argued that it was a defensive war and supported the unification of Germany, while politically opposing Bismarck and Napoléon III. Marx also warned that "if the German working class allow the present war to lose its strictly defensive character and to degenerate into a war against the French people, victory or defeat will prove alike disastrous."

Library of Congress

**France's crushing defeat by Prussian forces at Battle of Sedan in September 1870 sparked protests by workers throughout France, demanding an end to the monarchy and calling for a republic.**

But within weeks, Prussia easily occupied parts of France. A decisive blow came when French troops were crushed in a battle on 1-2 September 1870 in the city of Sedan in eastern France, where over 80,000 soldiers and officers were taken prisoner, including Napoléon III. When news was received of the defeat and capture of Napoléon III, there were protests by workers throughout France against Napoléon's monarchy, for a republic, and in opposition to capitulating to the Prussians. On the morning of September 4, workers in Paris invaded the parliament at the Palais Bourbon. The masses physically drove out the legislative deputies. Léon Gambetta, a bourgeois republican politician, was forced by them to announce the abolition of Napoléon III's Empire and to proclaim the Third Republic. The workers carried off some deputies to the Parisian seat of government, called the Hôtel de Ville, where the Government of National Defense was set up.

But from that day, September 4, the "Government of National Defense" was "in dread of the working class." Its leadership was made up partly of "notorious Orleanists [bourgeois monarchists], partly of middle-class Republicans, upon some of whom the insurrection of June, 1848, has left its indelible stigma" (Marx, "Second Address on the Franco-Prussian War," 6-9 September 1870). Despite their name, the group of bourgeois politicians in the "Government of National Defense" had little intention of fighting the Prussians and principally wanted to keep a workers revolt down. As Jules Favre, the foreign minister at the time, later said: The Government of National Defense had seized power in order to "repel the forces of anarchy and to prevent there being a shameful revolt in Paris."

Days after the French defeat at Sedan in early September 1870, the First International issued Marx's "Second Address on the Franco-Prussian War," which hailed the formation of the French republic and denounced the Prussian invasion of France. The International demanded that the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, where a German dialect is spoken but which have long considered themselves French, not be annexed to Germany. Marx also warned against the danger of the French workers rising up, because he thought it would be premature (although when the Commune later occurred, Marx, Engels and the International were the first to champion its cause). That said, the heterogeneous forces in the International did not all have the same attitude: Marx and Engels were critical of the French section of the International, which issued a "chauvinistic" declaration to the "German people" in the name of "French people," i.e., on a bourgeois-nationalist (not a working-class-internationalist) basis. This continued to be a political weakness of the elements who later led the Commune. As Lenin remarked: Combining "patriotism and socialism" was "the fatal mistake of the French socialists"; the French ***bourgeoisie***

*continued on page 10*

This pamphlet presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the origins of anarchism and the views of its leading figures through the 1871 Paris Commune and the split in the First International and discusses the impact of the 1917 October Revolution. The first article addresses radical youth today who, in an ideological climate conditioned by the so-called "death of communism," are drawn to all variants of anarchism, Green radicalism and left liberalism. The pamphlet is dedicated to the fight to win a new generation to revolutionary Marxism.

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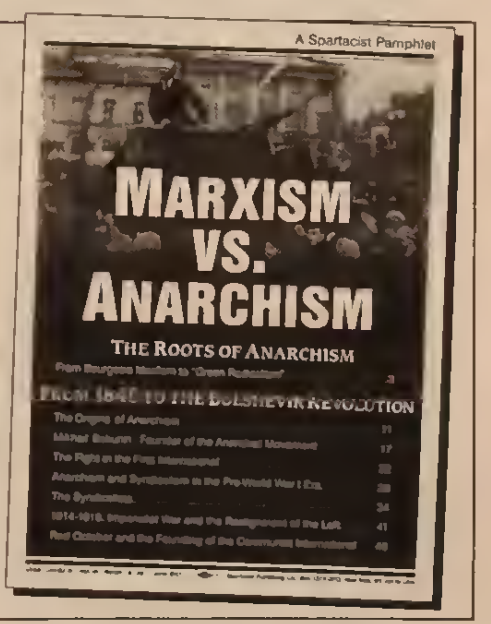

# Commune...

*(continued from page 9)*

should have borne "the responsibility for the national humiliation—the task of the *proletariat* was to fight for the socialist emancipation of labour from the yoke of the bourgeoisie."

### Paris Under Siege and Armistice

After 4 September 1870 the French continued to fight the Prussians but under very half-hearted bourgeois leadership. Soon, the Prussians surrounded Paris. The city was under siege and within weeks hunger reigned. By October 1870 not only the working masses but also the bourgeoisie had resorted to eating horsemeat. (The working class had begun to eat it during the industrial depression of 1866.) By mid November, pets were being eaten, and some even ate rats and carrier pigeons. The writer Victor Hugo was given parts from deer and antelope from the zoo. Heating oil also became scarce and the Parisian workers and poor were soon freezing. To top it off, by early January 1871 the Prussians were ceaselessly bombarding the city.

During this period, in the fall and winter of 1870-71, there were further revolts by working-class elements, along with a few lame military attempts by the bourgeois government to attack the Prussians. On 31 October 1870, news arrived in the cities that the second French army was defeated at Metz, and Thiers went to Paris to negotiate an armistice with Bismarck. But the French workers opposed an armistice, and on October 31 they revolted in several cities. In the course of the Paris uprising, radical leaders including Blanqui took members of the Government of National Defense hostage. The socialists made the government promise to call elections to a Commune, but it was a false promise. They had agreed only in order to quell outrage and buy time for pro-government soldiers to surprise and disarm the workers who had been holding the Government of National Defense hostage. After the failed uprising, while the siege of Paris continued, the government began secretly negotiating with the Prussians.

Finally, by late January 1871 much of the French population was exhausted. On January 28, Jules Favre from the Government of National Defense went to Versailles to negotiate an armistice with the Prussians. The terms of the armistice were steep: The payment to Prussia of a 200 million franc indemnity with the first payment to begin in two weeks; immediate surrender of most of the forts around Paris; handing over the guns and ammunition of the army (but not of the National Guard); the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany; and the holding of elections to a National Assembly.

Studio Henri, Saint-Brice

**Bread line on the Boulevard Montparnasse during siege of Paris, 1870-1871.**

The elections to the National Assembly were held on 8 February 1871. The Assembly was dominated by monarchists elected by the conservative peasants in the countryside. (The Assembly and its supporters were referred to as the "rurals" by the insurgent workers in the French cities.) Adolphe Thiers—who in 1848 was a leader of the Party of Order that massacred the workers—was made head of the government by the reactionary National Assembly. Since the Prussians were still at Versailles, the National Assembly met at the southwestern city of Bordeaux. A month later, on March 1, the Prussians marched symbolically down the Champs-Élysée and soon after, withdrew from Versailles while continuing to occupy land to the east of Paris and in northern France as security for the payment of war reparations due to them.

### The National Guard

I want to digress for a moment to talk about the National Guard. The National Guard in Paris was a distinct force from the French army. The existence of the National Guard dates back to the very beginning of the 1789 French Revolution, when it formed as a bourgeois citizens' militia. During the brief restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, the National Guard was abolished, but was re-established in 1830. After that, the class composition and the size of the National Guard fluctuated according to the political circumstances. In the course of the 1848 Revolution, for example, it grew from a small, conservative, bourgeois force to 250,000 people, with a large majority being poor and working-class battalions. After the defeat of 1848, it again became a small bourgeois body. On 4 September 1870, when the Third Republic was declared, the Parisian police fled and the National Guard was the main armed force left in the city. So in the winter of 1870-71, during the siege by the Prussians, the workers of Paris in the National Guard were armed, because there was no other force that could fend off the Prussians. The National Guard again grew, to over 300,000 people. During the siege, all available resources in the city were mobilized to manufacture munitions and, through a subscription set up by Victor Hugo, workers put in money to pay for the manufacture of cannons.

Illustrated London News

**4 September 1870: Workers at the Palais Bourbon, Paris, urge Léon Gambetta to declare the Third Republic.**

In late January 1871, after the armistice with the Prussians was signed, the French bourgeoisie had only 15,000 regular loyal army troops—the rest were Bismarck's captives. Meanwhile, there were 300,000 armed workers in the Paris National Guard and quite a few of them were "reds." Under pressure from the French bankers, in order to get money from them to make the first payment to the Prussians under the terms of the armistice, Thiers had to disarm the Parisian workers. As he later said, "Businessmen were going around repeating constantly that financial operations would never be started up again until all those wretches were finished off and their cannons taken away."

The workers in the National Guard immediately began organizing in opposition to the January 1871 armistice. National Guard battalions began to form electoral committees on a left-wing Republican basis for the February 8 elections. When the monarchists won the National Assembly elections, the National Guard called further meetings and continued to organize the Parisian workers for about a month between early February and early March. Thiers appointed a brutal army officer as "general" of the National Guard. On 3 March 1871, in opposition to Thiers' choice, some National Guard leaders (affiliated with the First International) revolted and appointed a provisional leadership of the National Guard and called for elections to a Central Committee. As Marx noted: The rising of Paris "against the government of Defence does not date from the 18th of March, although it conquered on that day its first victory against the conspirators, it dates


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# Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

*The Spartacus Youth Clubs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary internationalist program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize yauth in struggle as partisans of the warking class, championing the liberation of black people, women and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in socialist revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.*

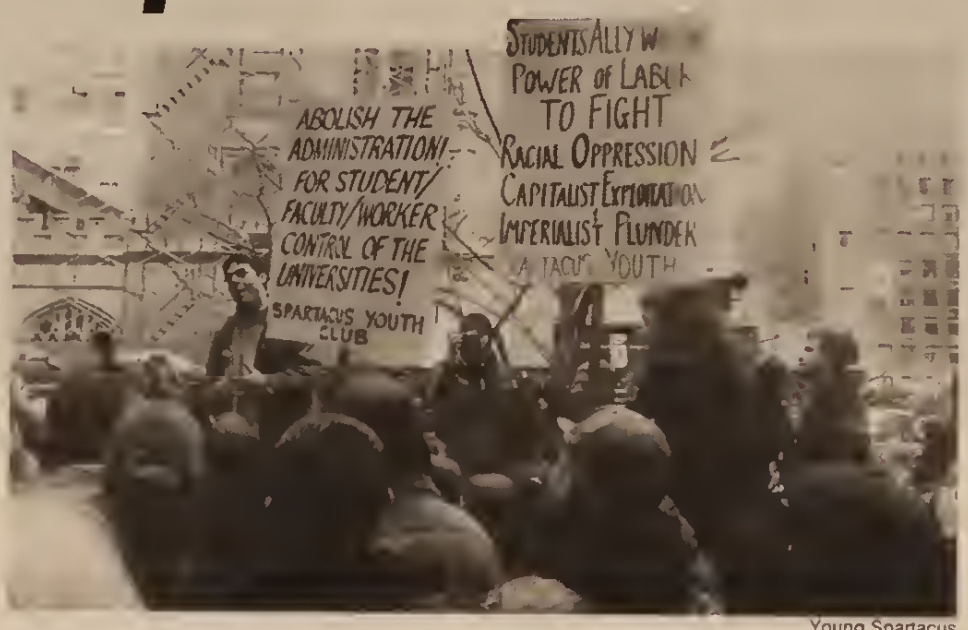
## What We Fight For

**1** Mobilize students behind the social power of the multiracial working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Unionize the South! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the bosses' government and courts out of the unions!

**2** Black oppression is the bedrock of racist American capitalism. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! For mass labor/black mobilizations to stop the fascists and race-terrorists! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense! No reliance on the capitalist courts or politicians! Fascist terror is not a question of "free speech." Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

**3** For free, quality, integrated public education for all! Nationalize the private universities! Down with the racist purge of higher education—defend affirmative action, no to tuition hikes! No to budget cuts! For an end to tracking! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Down with police occupation of public schools! Cops off campus!

**4** For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For mass, labor-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free abortion on demand! For free, quality 24-hour childcare! For free, quality health care for all! Equal pay for equal work! Down with anti-gay laws! Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against consensual activities, called "crimes without victims," like pornography, gambling, drug use, prostitution and "statutory rape"!




Young Spartacus

**SYC at demonstration in defense of public education at New York City's Hunter College, March 2010.**

**5** Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organize foreign-born workers into the unions! No deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Hispanic, anti-Arab, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry!

**6** Down with the "war on terror," which is a war aimed at immigrants, labor, the left and minorities! Free all the detainees! Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! For labor mobilizations against racist cop terror! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against black and Hispanic youth! The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the workers and the oppressed. It must be smashed through workers revolution!

**7** Defend separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! Keep religion out of the schools! No prayer in the schools! Down with the teaching of creationism! For the teaching of evolution! No government funding for religious, private or "charter" schools!

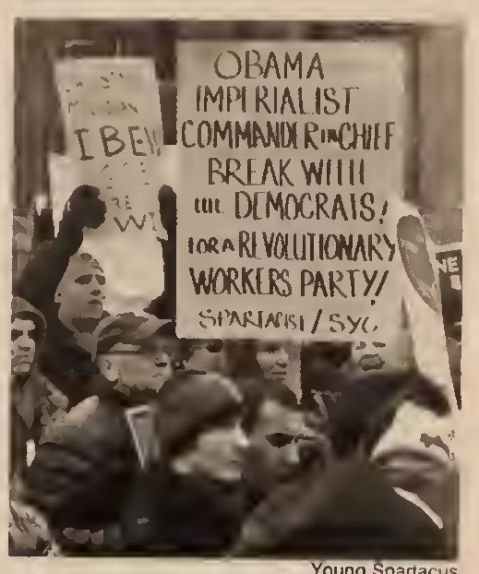
**8** Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! U.S. and allied forces out of Iraq, Afghanistan now! Down with the neocolonial occupations! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers at home! No illusions in the UN—a den of imperialist thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans, Haiti! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean! U.S. imperialist butchers: hands off the world! No to the draft! Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military! Drive ROTC, CIA and police recruiters off the campuses!

**9** For international working-class solidarity! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! Workers of the world, unite! For unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Cuba, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos against capitalist counterrevolution and imperialist attack! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism!

**10** Break with the racist, warmongering Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism! No support to any capitalist parties, including Greens! For a revolutionary, multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

15 May 2011

*The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the revolutionary Marxist Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*




Young Spartacus

**Madison, Wisconsin, rally against union-busting at the State Capitol, 5 March.**

from the 28 January, from the very day of the capitulation."

In early March, the elections to the Central Committee of the National Guard were announced with bright red posters all over Paris, urging citizens to organize in their neighborhoods and districts (called *arrondissements*). In response to the National Guard organizing campaign, the reactionary National Assembly claimed there was "incendiarism and pillage" in Paris. After the Prussians left Versailles, the French government moved ***there*** from Bordeaux, not to Paris, for fear of the plebeian masses. The Assembly then also took retaliatory measures against the workers and the petty bourgeoisie of the cities. It abolished the National Guard's pay, which was one of the few sources of income for most Parisians. The Assembly also supported the landlords who demanded the payment of all back rent due from the time of the siege, which impacted a wide swath of the population. It also demanded that all back bills had to be paid ***with interest*** over the next four months, which particularly impacted petty-bourgeois store owners.

These measures provoked broad outrage, but the spark leading to the workers uprising in Paris occurred in the wee hours of the morning on 18 March 1871. Thiers, lacking troops, sent army battalions sneaking into the city to steal the National Guard's cannons. Symptomatic of the lack of conscious organization in the National Guard, the cannons had been left unguarded. When milkmaids began arriving at dawn and saw the army trying to carry off one of the cannons, paid for by the workers themselves, the women alerted the National Guard and physically stopped the soldiers, scolding them for acting against the Republic. The National Guard began to assemble and appealed to the rank-and-file army soldiers, who went over to their side. When General Lecomte, their commanding officer, gave orders to fire on the unarmed population, the soldiers refused, and the general and another commanding officer were arrested by the soldiers and the National Guard. Soon, all across Paris the army disobeyed orders and fraternized with the Parisian masses. Later in the day, a bourgeois politician who had supported the brutal suppression of the June 1848 workers uprising, Clément Thomas, was recognized in the street. He and General Lecomte were both put up against a wall and shot by the insurgents.

Viking Press

**Paris, 18 March 1871: National Guard takes back the cannons. The National Guard appealed to rank-and-file army soldiers, who refused to fire on masses, signaling the start of Paris Commune.**

After the March 18 uprising and army mutiny, the governor of Paris fled to Versailles and the Central Committee of the National Guard began to rule, immediately implementing measures favorable to the working masses. On March 21, they suspended the sale of objects from pawn shops (pawning possessions had been one of the few ways poor Parisians had survived the siege). They reversed some of the reactionary decisions of the National Assembly, allowing more time for overdue bills to be paid and prohibiting evictions for unpaid rent. Despite the power in their hands, the Central Committee began to push for elections to a commune, having illusions that it would be possible to negotiate the elections with the bourgeois mayors of the Paris *arrondissements*, who all supported Thiers. After some days, most of the bourgeois mayors and their supporters fled to Versailles and joined forces with the National Assembly.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

# Crisis...

*(continued from page 1)*

the manic-depressive behavior of stock markets, the venality of the financial sector, the growing gulf between rich and poor, the high levels of unemployment, the naked consumerism and the English riots are telling us something. This is a system in deep trouble, and it is waiting to blow."

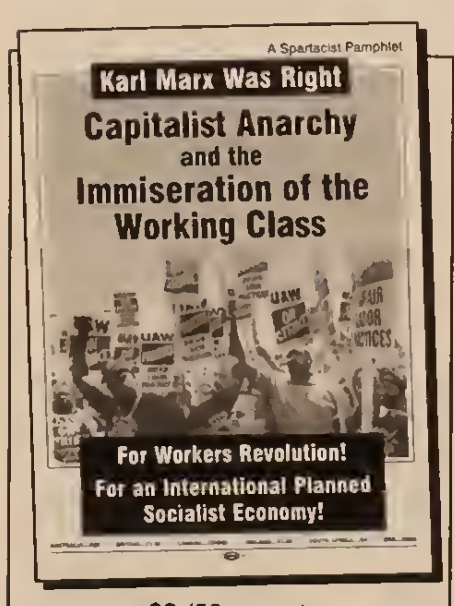
In Europe, austerity has been met with strikes and protests, at times massive, in defense of workers' livelihoods. But the workers' struggles are hamstrung by their reformist misleaders, who accept the inevitability of capitalist austerity while merely pleading that the blows be softened.

In this country, tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters came out in protest early this year against Wisconsin Republican governor Scott Walker's union-busting law tearing up the collective bargaining rights of public workers unions. With public workers unions everywhere threatened with obliteration, the Wisconsin protests inspired workers across the country who saw them as the beginning of a fightback against the one-sided class war targeting organized labor. But the bureaucratic misleaders of the AFL-CIO worked overtime to squelch any move toward actually using labor's strike weapon, channeling the anger of the ranks into support for the Democratic Party with a petition campaign to recall Walker and a number of Republican state legislators.

The decades of betrayals by these labor fakers have encouraged the U.S. rulers in the arrogant belief that they can get away with doing anything to the working class, the poor and most everyone else without provoking any social struggle. But the rulers and their labor lieutenants cannot eliminate the class struggle which is born of the irreconcilable conflict of interests between labor and its exploiters. The same conditions that grind down the workers can and will propel them into battle against the capitalist class enemy. This was seen in the midst of the Great Depression, when, at a brief upturn in the economy, workers began to engage in hard-fought battles to organize industrial unions in this country.

The sit-down strikes, mass pickets and other actions that built the CIO were ignited by the 1934 San Francisco general strike and mass strikes in Toledo and Minneapolis the same year. All of those strikes were led by reds. It was to head off the threat that class battles would challenge capitalist rule that New Deal social programs such as Social Security were implemented. Following World War II, Cold War red purges in the unions drove out socialists and Communists, including the Stalinists who had channeled workers' discontent into support for Roosevelt's Democratic Party.

Today, there are no longer avowed socialists with a significant base in the unions. But even in the absence of militants inspired by such political convictions, radical leaders will arise and they will be no less militant. Renewed labor battles will lay the basis for reviving and extending the unions, with a new, class-struggle leadership coming to the fore. For the workers to prevail against their exploiters, they must be armed with a Marxist political program that links labor's fight to the struggle to build a multiracial workers party that will do away with this entire system of wage slavery through socialist revolution. ***Fight, don't starve! Those who labor must rule!***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## The Bourgeoisie: An Unfit Ruling Class

In the *Communist Manifesto*, written more than 150 years ago, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels identified the key contradiction of capitalist society, which lies at the root of repeated economic crises. On the one hand, under capitalism production is socialized. But the means of production remain the private property of a few, who appropriate the wealth that is produced by workers' collective labor.

The boom-bust economic cycles are direct products of the capitalist system of production for profit. Capitalists invest in expanding productive capacity on the assumption that the additional output—autos, houses, etc.—can be sold at the existing rate of profit, at least. However, during periods of expansion the average rate of profit tends to fall. This situation eventually creates a crisis of overproduction, as capitalists produce more goods and services than can be sold at a satisfactory rate of profit. Thus there is the repeated spectacle of masses of workers losing their jobs and being thrown into destitution because *too much* has been produced. As described by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*:

> "Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce.... And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones."

Marx and Engels underlined that the rise of capitalism and the destruction of the feudal order represented a historic advance in the development of the productive forces—science, industry and technology. Yet capitalism in turn became a fetter on the further development of those productive forces. Out of the destitution and destruction produced by capitalism's inevitable economic crises, the means of production came to be monopolized by fewer and bigger conglomerates. Their ever-growing need for investment funds and other financing led to the domination of finance capital, that is, of banking goliaths.

By the late 19th century, capitalism reached its ultimate, imperialist stage. The capitalists in the advanced industrial countries were driven to wage wars to redivide the world in order to plunder markets and secure spheres of exploitation in less-developed countries. In their competition for world domination, the imperialist powers engulfed the peoples of the world in the barbarism of World Wars I and II, as well as waging countless wars in colonial and semicolonial countries.

The utter irrationality of capitalism reached new depths in the epoch of imperialism. While industrial capitalists continued to concentrate on the production of goods for sale (commodities), the machinations of the giant financial institutions took on unheard-of proportions. As revolutionary Marxist leader V. I. Lenin explained in his 1916 study *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

> "Although commodity production still 'reigns' and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the 'geniuses' of financial manipulation. At the basis of these manipulations and swindles lies socialised production; but the immense progress of mankind which achieved this socialisation, goes to benefit...the speculators."

A case in point is the U.S. bourgeoisie, which for decades has shunned investment that would expand and modernize its decaying industrial capacity or repair the country's crumbling bridges, roads, power lines and levees. Instead, it has squandered much of the economic surplus appropriated through the exploitation of labor on a succession of speculative binges. And in fact it was rampant financial speculation in the housing industry that triggered the current economic crisis.

AFP

**Athens, June 28: Greek workers protest government attempt to make workers pay for capitalist crisis.**

In Europe, such financial swindles have sharply accentuated the contradictions inherent in the European Union, an unstable consortium of rival capitalist states. At the heart of the EU's contradictions is the fact that the maintenance of a common currency requires a common state power. That is simply not possible under capitalism. The International Communist League long ago debunked the illusion that the EU could lay the basis for a capitalist United States of Europe. In a statement on the Maastricht Treaty, which laid the basis for the euro, the ICL wrote:

> "Since capitalism is organised on the basis of particular national states, itself the cause of repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world, it is impossible to cohere a stable pan-European bourgeois state. A European imperialist 'superstate' can be achieved only by the methods of Adolf Hitler, not those of Jacques Delors, the French social-democratic architect of Maastricht."
>
> —"For a Workers Europe—
> For Socialist Revolution!"
> *WV* No. 670, 13 June 1997

Only the conquest of state power by the proletariat can lay the basis for a ***socialist*** United States of Europe and a rationally planned economy.

As proletarian revolutionary internationalists, we have always opposed the EU as an imperialist trade bloc. Dominated by capitalist France and Germany, the EU's purpose is to increase their competitive edge against their imperialist rivals in the U.S. and Japan through the increased exploitation of the working class of the EU countries. As the price of entry, the weaker EU states were locked into the euro. Now they are going down, scrambling to meet their debt obligations by driving the working class into the ground. It couldn't have been otherwise.

In 1848, Marx and Engels indicted the bourgeoisie as "unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society" because "it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery." If the bourgeoisie of that time was unfit to rule, the imperialist rulers today have long passed their sell-by date.

## An Empire in Decline

Beginning with the 1898 Spanish-American War, the capitalist rulers of the rapidly developing U.S. set out to conquer the world, seizing Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines for their own plunder. When they emerged as the dominant imperialist power following World War II, the U.S. imperialists boasted of the beginning of the "American Century." But by the 1970s, they were seeing their dominance challenged by the rising economic might of Germany and Japan. With its treasury drained by the long, losing war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants, the U.S. was no longer the world's undisputed capitalist powerhouse. This was signaled by the devaluation of the dollar on 15 August 1971.

To reverse its declining fortunes, the U.S. ruling class launched a campaign to increase profitability through the increased exploitation of the working class —closing auto and steel factories, moving production to low-wage plants in the "open shop" South and to neocolonies in Latin America and Asia, increasing productivity through speedup and the institution of "two-tier" wage and benefits packages for younger workers. A key turning point was the smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981. It was Democratic president Jimmy Carter who drew up the plan to crush PATCO, which was implemented by his Republican successor, Ronald Reagan. The AFL-CIO bureaucrats let Reagan get away with it,


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Anatoly Skurikhin

**1934: "Hooverville" shantytown in Seattle (left); new pit opened in Soviet Union's Kuznetsk coal field. USSR's planned economy boomed as capitalist U.S. was mired in the Great Depression.**

crucially by refusing to call out other unions to shut down the airports. This defeat helped usher in a wave of broken unions and busted strikes.

Like Obama today, Reagan manufactured a debt crisis in order to destroy social programs. The "war on poverty" programs enacted to buy social peace in the inner cities following the mass ghetto upheavals of the 1960s were increasingly shredded. But it took Democratic president Bill Clinton to finally eliminate "welfare as we know it." Acting on Reagan's racist demagogy about black "welfare queens" living off the back of "hard-working taxpayers," Clinton abolished Aid to Families with Dependent Children for impoverished single mothers and their families.

Reagan had run a huge deficit spending program, slashing taxes for the rich while borrowing massively from Japanese and German bankers as well as oil-rich Arab sheikdoms. The overriding purpose was a huge military buildup for U.S. imperialism's Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. Despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin, the Soviet workers state continued to embody the main social gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The imperialists were determined to reconquer this vast territory—one-sixth of the planet—for their exploitation.

In 1991-92, the capitalists achieved their counterrevolutionary aim of destroying the world's first workers state. Coming into office on the back of this "victory," Clinton promised that the "peace dividend" would revitalize the economy by reducing the massive government debt. But the "dividend" was largely channeled into an orgy of speculative investment in telecommunications and Internet services, the so-called dot-com boom of the mid-late 1990s. That bubble burst in 2000-2001, ushering in another recession.

Clinton's neoliberal Democrats were followed by the Republican neo-cons of the George W. Bush administration. These nuclear cowboys invaded Afghanistan and Iraq to send a message to the rest of the world that the U.S. remained militarily the top dog on the planet. These wars and occupations were financed through foreign borrowing, while the filthy rich got a tax cut that outdid even the free lunch they got under Reagan. Then the housing-price bubble of the early-mid 2000s burst in 2007-2008, touching off a global financial crisis. Today, we have Barack Obama lamely responding to Standard & Poor's reduction of its AAA rating of U.S. treasury bonds by declaring that the U.S. has "always been and always will be a triple A country." The stock market responded by taking a $2 trillion nosedive.

After the Soviet Union's counterrevolutionary destruction, it appeared that the U.S. imperialists were successful in the quest they had begun almost a century earlier to be the masters of the world. But even as the U.S. has achieved unrivaled military supremacy, its domestic industrial base has continued to corrode. To some in the haughty U.S. ruling class, the decline of the country's economic might is bereft of any explanation—besides being contrary to "God's will." In consequence, a wing of the American bourgeoisie has seemingly gone totally insane.

Even by the lights of their own party's establishment, the current crop of Republican presidential candidates has gone off the deep end. On the campaign trail in Iowa, Texas governor Rick Perry accused the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, of treason for "printing more money to play politics," threatening "we would treat him pretty ugly in Texas." Perry, a dangerous reactionary, is here going after a Republican appointee of the Bush administration whose "soft money" policy has in fact been a boon for the bourgeoisie. By driving real interest rates down below zero, the Fed is essentially paying financial capitalists to borrow from the government—and then invest the money for a profit!

A week before Perry entered the race, he was the star of a 20,000-strong Christian fundamentalist revival meeting where he asked God to save the U.S. economy. Rival presidential candidate Michele Bachmann fervently believes that she and other good Christians are to be gathered in the air to sit at the right hand of God during what some call the coming "Rapture." In their deranged worldview, Perry and Bachmann have much in common with the mad miracle monk Rasputin, who advised the Russian tsarina in the dying days of the brutal and rotted-out Tsarist Empire. Obama hopes to ride back into the Oval Office as the "sane" alternative, one who can more effectively implement a bipartisan drive to slash every remaining social program that reflects an impulse not to see masses of starving, homeless people in the streets.

There is no question that the current Republican candidates are lunatics. But their lunacy is the reflection of the dangerous irrationality of the U.S. imperialist order. Just as the decadent, crazed and corrupt court of the tsars was swept away by the Russian Revolution, we Marxists are determined to build the revolutionary internationalist party that can lead the workers in overthrowing the decaying rule of American capitalism.

## For an International Socialist Planned Economy!

The reformist left pleads that the government "tax the rich" to provide the money for jobs, education, welfare for the poor and other beneficial programs. This refrain was recently taken up by multi-billionaire Warren Buffett in a *New York Times* (14 August) op-ed column titled "Stop Coddling the Super-Rich." In response, a Fox TV business analyst denounced Buffett, one of the world's wealthiest financial profiteers, as a "socialist"! Actually, it is the fear that the masses might revolt that concerns Buffett, who opined: "Americans are rapidly losing faith in the ability of Congress to deal with our country's fiscal problems. Only action that is immediate, real and very substantial will prevent that doubt from morphing into hopelessness. That feeling can create its own reality."

Amid a sea of millions of unemployed, the corporations and banks are sitting on mountains of cash. But you aren't going to get your hands on it by appealing to the tax authority of the capitalist state, whose purpose is to guarantee and defend the interests of the bourgeoisie. To resolve their debt crisis, state and local governments are slashing pensions for retirees to pay off bondholders. To "make the rich pay," the working class has to smash the rule of the bourgeoisie!

In an ideological climate conditioned by the imperialists' proclamations that the destruction of the Soviet Union proved Marxism to be a "failed experiment," the prospect of proletarian socialist revolution might appear implausible. But the collectivized economy in the Soviet Union worked! Despite its isolation in a world dominated by imperialism, the Soviet Union, arising from deep backwardness and the destruction of world war, civil war and imperialist intervention, became an industrial and military powerhouse.

Now, two decades after counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state, many in Russia hark back to when they were guaranteed a job, education, housing, health care and vacations, regretting that they were taken in by the myth of capitalist "democracy." What undermined the collectivized economy, and ultimately laid the basis for the destruction of the Soviet Union itself, was the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which robbed the workers of their political power and vainly sought to appease the imperialists by selling out workers' struggles in other countries.

Today, the deep economic crisis in the capitalist countries contrasts sharply with the situation in China, where the industries central to production are collectivized. At the same time that the U.S. and European governments have been bailing out the financial capitalists while making the workers pay, Beijing has massively channeled investment into developing infrastructure and productive capacity. Faced with a growing number of strikes and protests, the regime has increased the income of workers and peasants. However, China's Stalinist regime undermines the social gains of the 1949 Revolution by conciliating imperialism and promoting "market reforms" that strengthen internal counterrevolutionary forces. In its "partnership" with world capital, the Beijing bureaucracy is subsidizing American imperialism through its huge investment in U.S. treasury bonds, which, among other things, are used to finance the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we understand that the defense and international extension of the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution require a proletarian political revolution to replace the Stalinist bureaucrats with a revolutionary internationalist leadership and a regime of workers democracy.

**Moscow, December 1917: New sign over bank nationalized following October Revolution reads, "Second Branch of the People's Bank of the Russian Republic."**

As we wrote in our article "Wall Street Nightmare Stalks Working People" (*WV* No. 921, 26 September 2008):

> "You can solve a lot of problems with 'domestic cash transfers'—make life livable for workers, blacks, Latinos, jobless, homeless, welfare mothers, drug users, etc. And we communists intend to do so. But you have to first smash the power of the bourgeoisie. For that you need to build a workers party, one that doesn't 'respect' the property values of the bourgeoisie, a party that says to the exploited and oppressed: we want more, we want all of it, it ought to be ours, ***so take it***. And when we have the wealth of this country, we will begin to build a planned socialist economy on an international scale. Then we can right some historical wrongs and crimes and pay off some debts left over by our rulers, like some tens of billions of dollars to the Vietnamese and others whose countries have been maimed under the passing treads of American tanks. As for 'compensation' to the people who have driven the United States to ruin, we can offer to those who don't get in our way that they will live to see their grandchildren prosper in a truly humane society."■

# England...

*(continued from page 16)*

Qaddafi's deputy foreign minister urged Cameron to step down on the grounds that "violent repression of peaceful demonstrations by police" showed that "Cameron and his government have lost all legitimacy" (London *Daily Telegraph*, 11 August). At the outset of the bombing, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) issued a statement calling on workers around the world to take a stand for military defence of semicolonial Libya against the imperialist attack (printed in *WV* No. 977, 1 April).

The flames that engulfed English cities lit up the grotesque class inequality and racist oppression that are endemic to British capitalism. While venal Conservative and Labour spokesmen pontificate against the evils of "looting," everyone knows that the capitalist rulers are guilty of looting the country's wealth. The City of London is an international citadel of finance capital whose gleaming office towers represent the opulence that is generated by the grinding exploitation of the working people. Not far from the City are some of the poorest districts in London, where a large percentage of minorities are concentrated. When boom turned to bust, the banks were bailed out (and the gigantic bankers' bonuses were protected) at massive cost to the taxpayers. Now, at Cameron's instigation, local councils have begun proceedings to evict families of "rioters" from public housing, while work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith proposed withdrawing benefits from those convicted.

## "There Is Nothing Here for Us"

The rioting spread so dramatically because, on top of decades of grinding poverty affecting whites as well as blacks and Asians, the working people are being fleeced to pay for the current economic crisis. Nearly a million people aged 16 to 24 are unemployed. Youth joblessness overall has reached almost 20 per cent and is almost 50 per cent for black youth. Official figures for riot-affected areas such as Hackney, East London, show 44 per cent of children living in poverty.

A growing number of youth are being cast out of productive economic life and dubbed Neets—"not in employment, education or training." The government tripled tuition fees in higher education and abolished the Education Maintenance Allowance, a small stipend that enabled poor youth to attend college, sparking militant student protests last December. Faced with cutting its budget by 75 per cent, Haringey local council, which covers Tottenham area, closed most of its youth clubs. One youth remarked, "At least we had somewhere to go. Now we walk down the streets, we get pulled over by police. There is nothing here for us" (London *Guardian*, 29 July).

## There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

In looking at the British "justice" system today, one does not have to be a Marxist to see what class it serves. No one has been arrested from the Metropolitan Police—truly one of London's most dangerous armed gangs—which has been exposed for receiving hefty sums of cash (in plastic shopping bags) from the gang of Rupert Murdoch & Co. Intimately connected to these outfits, Tory and Labour politicians howl against the "criminality" of anyone who helped himself to a pair of sneakers or a bottle of water. The politicians' hypocrisy is indeed rich in light of the recent scandal over Members of Parliament (MPs) making taxpayers shell out for the upkeep of their second homes, not to mention the cost of your "duck island" or cleaning out the moat at your country estate!

People accused of involvement in "rioting" are being thrown into prison on ludicrously trivial charges. Two white youths were sentenced to four years in prison for having (jokingly) summoned friends on Facebook to a "riot" that never happened. In Brixton, a black neighbourhood in South London, one person got a six-month sentence for stealing bottles of water worth £3.50. In Manchester an alcoholic who had just been released from prison and had only £4 in his pocket was sentenced to 16 months for taking a box of doughnuts from Krispy Kreme. The truth is that in poor neighbourhoods such as Tottenham, there isn't much to steal.

The blatant class bias of capitalist "justice" in Britain today recalls the 17th-century English poem protesting the enclosure (i.e., theft) of common lands that were being privatised by the rising bourgeoisie:

> "They hang the man and flog the woman
> Who steals the goose from off the common
> But leave the greater villain loose
> Who steals the common off the goose."

Or, as Friedrich Engels, co-author with Karl Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*, aptly wrote in his 1845 book, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, the majority of offences against property arise from some form of want because "what a man has, he does not steal." With the masses being driven to rioting by the increasingly abject conditions of their lives, the Spartacist League/Britain suggests, as an immediate measure, that the government ***give the "laaters" £10,000 each and let them ga!***

Rioting, however, can do nothing to eliminate the grinding poverty of Britain's working class. As the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote when Los Angeles exploded following the 1992 acquittal of the cops who beat black motorist Rodney King nearly to death, the looting there was "indeed understandable, but won't do anything to eliminate the entrenched poverty of America's inner cities.... ***The point is not ta seize articles af cansumptian but ta expropriate the means af productian. And that takes a leap in cansciousness and organization to da away with the capitalist order***" (*WV* No. 551, 15 May 1992).

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), followers of the late Tony Cliff, ludicrously equates looting with the expropriation of the means of production—i.e., the seizure and collectivisation of industry, the banks, etc., by the proletariat. The SWP writes: "Karl Marx was exactly right when he talked about expropriating the expropriators, taking back what they have taken from us. That's what looting by poor working class people represents and in that sense it is a deeply political act" (*Socialist Worker*, 13 August). The idea that looting offers a solution to the grinding poverty, racism and oppression besetting black and Asian communities shows that the SWP will mindlessly cheerlead for anything that moves, no matter how far removed from socialist consciousness it may be. But the bottom line for these reformists is to refurbish Labour's image, which they do with calls to "Jail the Tories, not young people" (*Socialist Worker*, 20 August) and by hailing what they call a "rising against Tory Britain" (*Socialist Worker*, 13 August).

Riots are an expression of despair, often including ugly incidents of indiscriminate attacks on individuals. The killing of three young Asian men in Birmingham by a car driven straight at them is a heinous crime. The racial tensions between blacks and Asians during the riots were an outgrowth of the "divide and rule" policies the British rulers apply to divide the proletariat and weaken its struggles, as they did historically to maintain their Empire. In an effort to defuse those tensions, Tariq Jahan, father of one of the victims, courageously appealed for calm, saying, "I lost my son. Blacks, Asians, whites—we all live in the same community." He added: "Step forward if you want to lose your sons. Otherwise, calm down and go home—please."

There is an urgent need for the working class and oppressed to struggle against the relentless attacks on their livelihoods. The question is how. The current deep-going economic crisis is part and parcel of the normal workings of the capitalist system. There will be no end to the misery, poverty and repression that afflict the vast majority of the population short of the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order and the establishment of rule by the working class. The SL/B seeks to forge a multiethnic revolutionary workers party—a Leninist-Trotskyist party—based on a programme for international socialist revolution.

## Mobilize Workers' Social Power!

Britain is the latest country in Europe to be swept by major unrest, reflecting seething anger among the working classes against relentless attacks on their living standards. Particularly in Greece, the working class has waged major class battles, including several general strikes in recent years, but the impact of these struggles has been undermined by the reformist misleaders of the working class, who accept the need for austerity as a solution to the economic crisis. In Britain, the fact that the pent-up fury against the government's attacks on the working class is being dissipated in outbursts of rioting testifies to the low level of class struggle over the past two decades. This is due in no small part to the failure of the trade-union bureaucracy to mount any effective struggle against austerity and job cuts, allowing the capitalist rulers to ride roughshod over the working people.

Trade-union membership in Britain today is concentrated among low-paid workers in the public sector, with minorities heavily represented. The membership of the rail unions in London Underground and the national railway network, as well as the civil service and postal unions, is multiethnic. Together, these unions have considerable social power. Transport workers in London for example, have the power to bring the city to a halt, including its precious financial district. But mobilising that power requires a political struggle against the reformist trade-union bureaucracy, which is tied to the Labour Party and to the racist capitalist order.

It is through the intervention of Marxists into class and social struggles that a revolutionary workers party will be forged. Such a party would champion the interests of all the oppressed, fighting against racism and other manifestations of chauvinism. An integral part of building this party is the fight for a class-struggle leadership in the trade unions. In Britain today, such a leadership would appeal to disaffected youth by waging a fight for jobs, through demands such as a shorter working week with no loss in pay. A class-struggle leadership would demand union control of hiring and union-run job training and skills programmes to recruit minority youth into the workforce and into the unions. The task of a Leninist party is to bring about the necessary change in consciousness in the proletariat, leading to the understanding that a society run in the interests of the working people—with jobs for all and a decent standard of living—cannot be achieved within the framework of capitalism.

From the point of view of Britain's working class and oppressed minorities, it makes little difference whether the government is Tory or Labour, historically the social-democratic vehicle that tied the working class to the capitalist order. When the riots erupted both parties (as well as the Liberal Democrats) vied to be seen as the best defenders of the police. Not a single Labour MP—neither the so-called "lefts" nor the handful of black MPs—condemned the cops who killed Mark Duggan. Far from it: Labour spokesmen attacked the government from the right, denouncing the planned cuts to the police budget. Labour Party leader Ed Miliband said, "Police on our streets make our communities safer and make the public feel safer" (BBC, 11 August).

Tottenham's black Labour MP, David Lammy, ranted to the press about the "totally unacceptable" behaviour of the rioters, voicing only the mildest criticisms of the cops who gunned down Mark Duggan. Nevertheless, Lammy, who symbolises a very small layer of middle-class blacks, was subjected to an outrageous racist tirade by reactionary historian David Starkey on BBC television. Black MP for Hackney Diane Abbott, once regarded as a Labour "left," chimed in with the "law and order" brigade, calling for curfews to help "regain control of the streets." Labour's backing for the

AP

**Cops arrest man in South London as revolt spreads in city's impoverished neighborhoods, August 8.**

Orbis

**Derry, 1972: British troops occupying Northern Ireland round up "suspects" in crackdown against Catholic minority.**

racist cops is not new: When he was London mayor, Labour's Ken Livingstone was unwavering in his support for the police who in 2005 brutally killed Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes, deemed a "terrorism suspect." Mark Duggan was killed under the Metropolitan Police's "Operation Trident," which supposedly targets "gun crime" among blacks. This operation was begun under Labour home secretary David Blunkett, in consultation with William Bratton, the former police chief of New York and other major U.S. cities whom David Cameron proposes to employ in London.

## Minorities and the 1984-85 Miners Strike

The link between class struggle against the capitalist state and the fight against racial oppression seems remote today, but this was not always the case. It is not an accident that the last major assault by the state on Britain's predominantly black and Asian inner-city areas took place in 1985, the same year as the defeat of the heroic miners strike. For more than a year of bitter class war, miners and their families had defended themselves against an army of police sent by Margaret Thatcher's Tory government to occupy the coalfields. In the course of the strike, powerful bonds were forged between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and black and Asian minorities. While blacks and Asians saw in the (predominantly white) miners union a powerful force battling against the state and became enthusiastic supporters of the strike, many miners became convinced of the importance of combating racial oppression.

The defeat of the NUM dealt a severe blow to the workers movement in this country, the effects of which—from accelerating deindustrialisation to gutting the unions—are still felt today. For minority communities, the strike's defeat also had grave ramifications. In the space of a few weeks, the cops staged racist provocations that sparked explosions of anger in major black and Asian neighbourhoods. A police provocation in September 1985 in Birmingham's Handsworth was followed weeks later by the police shooting of a black woman, Cherry Groce, in Brixton, sparking a revolt there. Shortly afterwards, Liverpool's Toxteth area also erupted. When the police invaded Broadwater Farm on 7 October 1985 in the aftermath of the racist cop killing of Cynthia Jarrett, they got more than they bargained for. As residents defended their communities in a raging battle lasting several days, one cop was killed. For this, three innocent youth—Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite—served years in prison as the result of a police frame-up.

Following the revolts in Handsworth and Brixton, the SL/B noted that in the aftermath of the miners strike, Thatcher was intent on teaching a bloody lesson to the black and Asian population that had warmly supported the miners, warning that this would mean escalating racist attacks. The article stated:

> "The Spartacist League has fought to tap the sense of unity between minorities and trade union militants kindled in the miners strike, as part of our perspective of building the multiracial revolutionary workers party which will be a tribune of all the oppressed. We have fought to mobilise the integrated Birmingham labour movement for defence of the Handsworth community against the cop terror. The same is needed in Brixton and elsewhere. Protest strike action by London's heavily black and Asian Tube and bus workers, for example, could make the racist bosses put a halt to their reign of terror in Brixton. But that takes a political struggle against the racist, pro-capitalist labour misleaders."
>
> —*Workers Hammer* No. 73, October 1985

John Harris/IFL

Workers Hammer

**September 1984: Cops and picketers clash during heroic British coal miners strike (top); Spartacist League/Britain at Brighton march calls for class-struggle solidarity against union-busting Thatcher government.**

It wasn't mainly the repression by the viciously anti-union Thatcher government that ensured the defeat of the miners strike. The Labour Party leadership under Neil Kinnock and the Trades Union Congress bureaucracy were openly hostile to the strike. Particularly responsible for the defeat were the "left" trade-union leaders who failed to strike alongside the miners. This includes the dockers union leaders, who sent their members back to work twice during the miners strike. A few years later, the dockers union itself was decimated. The trade-union "lefts" were wedded to the Labour Party, to "gradual change" through Parliament, and hence to the capitalist order.

When the black Labour leader of Haringey council, Bernie Grant, voiced the simple truth that the cops who invaded Broadwater Farm got "a bloody good hiding," he was widely denounced, including by the Labour leadership. Grant later apologised, but he remained popular among blacks until his death in 2000. Although he was regarded as a troublemaker by the Labour Party leadership, Grant served Labour's purpose, notably in 1993 when he helped prevent an explosion of rage from "getting out of hand" following the death of Jamaican woman Joy Gardner at the hands of cops who had seized her for deportation. Above all, Grant played his part in fostering illusions among black youth in Labour, the party that had introduced racist virginity tests for South Asian women entering Britain when it was in office in 1974-79.

The unfettered financial boom that characterised the Thatcher years went hand in hand with the destruction of manufacturing jobs, which continued throughout Labour's years in office. Among those thrown onto the dole queues were the descendants of immigrants from former Caribbean and Indian colonies brought over to do low-paid work in times of labour shortage, particularly after World War II. Not only the former coal and steel producing areas but also the textile manufacturing towns of Oldham and Bradford, which employed thousands of Asian workers, became wastelands of chronic unemployment and poverty.

## For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Today Labour is lurching towards right-wing populism, which is inherently racist, competing with the fascist English Defence League (EDL) for the allegiance of backward white workers. In recent years, Labour leaders and trade-union bureaucrats have embraced the slogan "British jobs for British workers," historically a rallying cry of the fascists that became prevalent during reactionary strikes against foreign workers on construction sites in 2009. The reformist Socialist Party (SP), section of Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International, wholeheartedly supported these strikes. We categorically denounced these actions and underlined the need for defence of immigrant workers. We pointed out that a class-struggle leadership in the unions would start from an internationalist framework, organising immigrant workers into the unions and collaborating with workers across national boundaries.

In keeping with its long record of supporting the police and prison guards, the SP echoed the Labour leaders during the hoopla over the recent riots, sympathetically quoting a spokesman from the Metropolitan Police Federation bemoaning the low morale among cops due to the government's intended cuts (socialist-party.org.uk, 8 August). Harassment by cops—lyingly depicted by the SP as fellow workers—has now reached the point where black people are *26 times* more likely than whites to be stopped and searched by police in England and Wales, according to a study by London School of Economics and others.

The number of deaths, particularly of black people, in police custody is staggering. In March, reggae artist Smiley Culture (David Emmanuel) died during a police raid at his Surrey home, with the cops making the incredible claim that he stabbed himself to death. The same month, Kingsley Burrell Brown died from injuries sustained in the course of being committed to hospital under the Mental Health Act by police in Birmingham. Last month, 21-year-old Demetre Fraser supposedly "committed suicide" by jumping from the 11th floor of a high-rise block in Birmingham when confronted by police. In a single week in August, three people died at the hands of police: 27-year-old Dale Burns died in Cumbria when police subjected him to shocks from a Taser gun and pepper spray; black 25-year-old Jacob Michael died after being pepper sprayed in Cheshire; 53-year-old Philip Hulmes died in police custody in Bolton.

The racist backlash against "looters" has emboldened the EDL, which smelled an opportunity to mobilise vigilantes in some of the riot-hit areas. Under previous Labour governments, the EDL had drawn strength from the "war on terror" that primarily targeted Muslims, as well as from the relentless anti-immigrant campaigns. The EDL is a deadly threat to blacks as well as to Asians, against whom it has staged numerous racist provocations in the past and threatens to do again in East London on 3 September. And make no mistake: these fascists pose a direct threat to the entire working class, as potential shock troops to be deployed against rising class struggle. It is the task of the workers movement to stop them in their tracks.

As distinct from the liberals and reformists who lead Unite Against Fascism, we oppose calls on the capitalist state to "ban the fascists." It is not hard to see why. In response to the planned EDL march in East London and an anti-fascist counter-demonstration, Home Secretary Theresa May has banned *all* demonstrations in five London boroughs for a period of 30 days. As *Workers Hammer* No. 209 (Winter 2009-2010) declared, EDL provocations "must be met with massive protest centred on the trade unions mobilised for defence of Muslims, immigrants and all the intended victims of the EDL scum." The article continued:

> "It is in the interests of the multiethnic working class as a whole to combat these racist terrorists. We call for trade union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist provocations. At the same time, as Marxists we make clear that the decaying capitalist system breeds the social conditions in which the fascists thrive and therefore the struggle against fascism is inseparable from the fight for socialist revolution."

Out of the social struggles that will inevitably be waged by workers and minorities will arise a new generation of militant leaders. What's needed is a party dedicated to the task of leading the working class to power. This requires socialist revolution to overthrow the entire capitalist order. Fundamental change in the interests of the working people can only come about through revolutionary internationalist class struggle, which must shatter the framework of capitalism worldwide. Socialist revolution will lay the basis for rationally planned economies based on production for need, not for profit, and for a qualitative development of the productive forces, opening the road to the elimination of poverty and the creation of an egalitarian socialist society.■

## Correction

In "Greece: Mass Anger over Savage Austerity" (*WV* No. 983, 8 July) the caption of a photo of Communist-led partisans in December 1944 stated, "Greek Stalinists went on to disarm workers, enter capitalist government." In fact, the Stalinists had joined the capitalist government in September 1944 and resigned from it in early December.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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# English Cities Erupt Over Racist Cop Killing, Austerity

August 8: Youth in East London confront riot cops on third night of upheaval following racist police killing of Mark Duggan (inset). Reuters

## Free All Arrested for "Looting"!

LONDON—On 4 August, the cops shot and killed a young black man, Mark Duggan, in Tottenham, North London. Contrary to police disinformation circulated at the time, Duggan did not fire any shots. But that did not stop the press from branding the victim as a "gang member" killed in a "shootout" with police. The family of Mark Duggan, a father of four, were given almost no information about his death. Instead they were told to wait for the results of an inquiry by the Independent Police Complaints Commission, known among blacks as the police cover-up commission. Two days after Duggan was gunned down, his family members took part in a protest of some 300 people at a Tottenham police station demanding information, but none was given. Reportedly, police attacked a young woman demonstrator, knocking her to the ground.

There is a limit to the endurance of minority youth, who have been treated like criminals since the time they could walk. For black and South Asian youth in this country, degradation at the hands of the cops, including the relentless use of "stop and search," is calculated to underline the message: you have no rights whatsoever. The killing of Mark Duggan was one atrocity too far. Anger exploded. Tottenham erupted in flames in scenes reminiscent of the riots in Tottenham's Broadwater Farm housing project in 1985, which followed the police killing of a black mother.

Little of substance has changed in the lives of black people since that time. This time around, the revolt in Tottenham ignited a mass of social tinder at the bottom of British capitalist society. Rioting spread like wildfire to other areas of London and to parts of Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool. Black, Asian and white youth took to the streets to give the finger to the police, the government and a society in which they manifestly have no stake. For four days, riots by the impoverished and dispossessed swept cities and towns. Britain was exposed to the world as the racist, class-divided hellhole it is.

The arrogant rulers of decaying British capitalism have long regarded workers and the poor, and especially their black and Asian components, as merely an "underclass" deserving neither of education nor training, worthy only of state repression. In an attempt to deny that the cause of the riots is entrenched economic hardship, exacerbated by his government's savage budget cuts, Conservative (Tory) prime minister David Cameron blamed the riots on "moral decay" and "criminality pure and simple," insisting that they "were not about poverty." Vowing to hunt down and jail "suspects," Cameron seized the opportunity to massively strengthen repression. A vast police dragnet has so far arrested some 2,000 people, on any and every pretext, using information gleaned from trawling social networking sites and CCTV footage (and of course hacking phones). Television news has shown endless footage of gangs of cops brutally smashing down doors of people's homes to arrest "suspects."

Shredding any semblance of "due process," the police are charging suspects before compiling evidence and opposing bail for the majority of those arrested. Cases involving minor offences that would normally result in a reprimand and would not even go to the lower magistrates' courts are being referred to the Crown courts, which have greater sentencing powers. The vast majority of those arrested are being jailed, regardless of the alleged offence or of any previous convictions. Such a blanket policy of incarceration will vastly increase the numbers of people with criminal records which, for many youth, particularly blacks and Asians, is enough to ensure that they never work in their lives.

The draconian measures meted out in the aftermath of the riots are an escalation of the type of harsh repression meted out to students protesting against education cuts last year. The message from the capitalist rulers to the working class and the oppressed is clear: meekly accept the relentless attacks on jobs and living standards, or else! It is in the direct interests of the working class, especially the trade unions, to oppose these police-state measures and to demand that all charges be dropped against those arrested. ***We demand: Immediate release of all those arrested and jailed for "looting"!***

Prominent politicians are calling for the use of plastic bullets and other weapons that the British state has historically deployed against the oppressed Catholics of Northern Ireland. The same capitalist ruling class that is brutally cracking down on dissent and opposition at home is engaged in imperialist subjugation abroad. Under the Labour Party government, British imperialist armed forces were in the forefront of the bloody occupations of neocolonial Afghanistan and Iraq. Under the present Tory-Liberal coalition government, British imperialism is playing a leading role in the NATO terror bombing of oil-rich Libya. Mocking Cameron's lying claim that NATO bombs are "protecting civilians" and upholding "democracy,"

*continued on page 14*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 986

16 September 2011


## Defend Gains of Cuban Revolution!

# Cuba: Economic Crisis and "Market Reforms"

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Getty

Marcelino Vázquez Hernández

**Top left: Cubans receiving bread ration at subsidized bakery in Havana, 2006. Top right: Raúl Castro (at left) at December 2010 Parliament session where he pushed market-oriented reforms. Above: 2011 May Day demonstration, Plaza de la Revolución, Havana.**

In early August, Cuba's National Assembly endorsed a five-year program of market-oriented economic reforms that had been adopted by the Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in the spring. The projected measures include the elimination of over a million state jobs (20 percent of the workforce), major cuts to state subsidies, a greatly expanded small-business sector and enhanced incentives to attract foreign investment.

From the time they were first announced, in August 2010, the centerpiece of the "market reforms" has been the call to eliminate a million state jobs. The bureaucracy of the state-controlled Cuban Workers Federation (CTC) has been prominent in promoting these cuts, shamelessly claiming they are essential to "continue perfecting socialism." At this year's May Day demonstration in Havana, the CTC marched under a call for "unity, productivity and efficiency."

Originally, half the job cuts were supposed to take effect by March, but this deadline came and went. The Communist Party congress the following month was then supposed to set them in motion, but it decided to again postpone their implementation in the face of reported widespread discontent. As early as last October, Reuters news agency reported that party officials had to be brought to the Habana Libre Hotel to "calm workers down" when they learned of the planned job losses. Laid-off workers will only briefly get severance payments of up to 60 percent of lost monthly wages.

The stated aim of the "reforms" is to revive Cuba's stagnant economy, which has never fully recovered from the severe crisis that followed the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union some two decades ago. Despite the rule of a Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet workers state provided a crucial economic lifeline for this small, impoverished island struggling to survive under the shadow of the American imperialist behemoth. The Soviet Union also represented a military obstacle to Washington's revanchist counterrevolutionary ambitions.

The severe economic problems of the post-Soviet period were heightened in 2008 when Cuba was hit hard by the global capitalist financial crisis. The price of nickel, Cuba's main export commodity, fell by as much as 80 percent, while remittances from Cubans living in the U.S. declined substantially. In the same year, hurricanes destroyed $10 billion of infrastructure. Facing a trade deficit of nearly $12 billion, Cuba had to default on payments to foreign creditors. The fact that Cuban doctors and other professionals working abroad account for about 60 percent of the country's hard-currency earnings, with the tourist industry second, speaks to the dire state of the Cuban economy.

Bourgeois and leftist commentators alike have seized on the regime's recent announcements to make wildly varying predictions. These range from fatuous optimism about isolated Cuba's prospects for advancing toward socialism to claims that capitalism is being, or has been, restored on the island. To understand why such views are fallacious requires a Marxist understanding of the class nature of the Cuban state and its ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

We Trotskyists do not take a side in the debate between advocates of market reforms/decentralization and those who would return to a more rigidly centralized economy. Our starting point is the understanding that Cuba is a ***bureaucratically deformed workers state***, a society where capitalism has been overthrown but political power is monopolized by a parasitic ruling caste whose privileges derive from administering the collectivized economy. As the example of China shows, there is an inherent tendency for such regimes to abandon bureaucratized central planning in favor of market mechanisms. Intrinsically hostile to workers democracy, they resort to the discipline of the market (and the unemployment line) as a whip to raise labor productivity.

Despite the distortions of bureaucratic rule, first under Fidel Castro and now

*continued on page 7*

**For Workers Political Revolution!**
**For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!**

# Execution Set for September 21

# Stop Legal Lynching of Troy Davis!

Time is running out for Troy Davis, a 41-year-old black man facing execution despite substantial evidence of his innocence. On September 6, a Georgia Superior Court judge signed an execution warrant, and a date has been set for September 21. Davis, who faced three prior death warrants, has now exhausted all his appeals. In March, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to even consider the evidence exonerating Davis of the 1989 killing of a white off-duty police officer. Davis has a hearing before the Georgia Board of Pardons and Parole two days before the scheduled execution. Davis's supporters have called for a global day of solidarity on September 16, including a march in Atlanta. What's needed is a mass outpouring of protest. Opponents of the racist death penalty, defenders of civil liberties, trade-union militants and fighters for black rights must demand: ***Stop the execution! Free Troy Davis!***

The impending execution is nothing short of a racist legal lynching. In 1991, Davis was sentenced to death after a frame-up conviction based on questionable "eyewitness" identifications, dubious accounts that he confessed and testimony coerced by the cops, without a shred of physical evidence linking him to the killing. Seven of the prosecution's nine witnesses have since recanted. The only holdouts are one man who may be the actual killer and another who initially denied being able to identify the shooter, only to pin the killing on Davis at trial two years later.

At a federal court hearing last year, some of the witnesses were finally able to tell how they were forced by the cops to falsely implicate Davis. But in upholding the conviction and death sentence, the judge sneered that this testimony was "smoke and mirrors" and declared the accounts of police/prosecution coercion —a regular feature of the capitalist justice system—were not credible...because the cops said it didn't happen that way! (See "Troy Davis Appeal Turned Down," *WV* No. 965, 24 September 2010.)

The impending legal lynching of Troy Davis exemplifies that for America's capitalist rulers the life of a black man on the bottom is worth nothing. In this decaying profit system, which was founded on black chattel slavery, the bourgeois rulers' impulse to genocide is seen in the death penalty, mass black incarceration, the elimination of welfare and rampant cop

Georgia Department of Corrections

terror in the ghettos. Troy Davis is a victim of a bourgeois "justice" system premised on protecting capitalist rule and profits through organized terror against the working class, the black masses and other minorities.

We oppose the death penalty on principle—for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to decide who shall live and who shall die. Capital punishment is a barbaric legacy of medieval torture, a system of legal murder that reinforces the brutalization of society in all respects. And in racist America, black people are overwhelmingly the victims of state terror, whether this system is administered by the Republican or Democratic parties of capital. Davis was tried in a courtroom flying the Georgia state flag, which at the time included the battle flag of the slaveholding Confederacy. The lynching of black men—by racist mobs and by the august courts—is deeply embedded in this country's history, particularly but by no means exclusively in Southern states like Troy Davis's Georgia. Over 40 percent of those on death row in this country are black. ***Abolish the racist death penalty!***

Through petitions and public statements, hundreds of thousands have opposed Davis's execution, including former president Jimmy Carter, former FBI director William Sessions, South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Pope. While this may have given Georgia's rulers some pause, it was only so they could gather additional judicial sanction to kill Davis. To put a final halt to the grisly workings of the U.S. rulers' machinery of death requires sweeping away the racist capitalist system through proletarian revolution.■

TROTSKY

LENIN

### The Revolutionary Newspaper

*In one of his earliest writings, V. I. Lenin explained the crucial importance of the Marxist press in building a revolutionary workers party. The article was written for the fourth issue of* Iskra, *newspaper of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party's revolutionary Marxist tendency, which would later develop into the Bolshevik Party.*

The immediate task of our Party is not to summon all available forces for the attack right now, but to call for the formation of a revolutionary organisation capable of uniting all forces and guiding the movement in actual practice and not in name alone, that is, an organisation ready at any time to support every protest and every outbreak and use it to build up and consolidate the fighting forces suitable for the decisive struggle....

A newspaper is what we most of all need; without it we cannot conduct that systematic, all-round propaganda and agitation, consistent in principle, which is the chief and permanent task of Social-Democracy in general and, in particular, the pressing task of the moment, when interest in politics and in questions of socialism has been aroused among the broadest strata of the population....

The role of a newspaper, however, is not limited solely to the dissemination of ideas, to political education, and to the enlistment of political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this last respect it may be likened to the scaffolding round a building under construction, which marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, enabling them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour. With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organisation will naturally take shape that will engage, not only in local activities, but in regular general work, and will train its members to follow political events carefully, appraise their significance and their effect on the various strata of the population, and develop effective means for the revolutionary party to influence those events.

—V. I. Lenin, "Where to Begin?" May 1901, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5


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## Anti-Abortion Onslaught Targets Blacks, Poor

# For Free, Safe Abortion on Demand!

Last month, Dr. LeRoy Carhart was the target of protest once again by the fanatical anti-abortionists of Operation Rescue outside his new Maryland clinic near Washington, D.C. Carhart was an associate of Dr. George Tiller, a late-term abortion provider who fought decades of harassment and violence that culminated in his assassination two years ago in Kansas. Braving an intensely hostile social climate, Dr. Carhart, one of the very few remaining practitioners of abortions late into pregnancy, continues to put his life on the line for women's rights.

The drive against late-term abortion providers is a major part of a wholesale assault on abortion rights, from violent attacks on clinics to a wave of restrictive court rulings and state laws. This summer, a Planned Parenthood clinic in Texas and a women's center in Detroit were attacked with Molotov cocktails, and last year a clinic in Madera, California, was hit with a firebomb. While the Supreme Court has not overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision striking down anti-abortion laws, federal and state governments under both the Democratic and Republican parties have used "salami tactics" to reverse abortion rights piecemeal. As a result, the capitalist rulers have made abortion virtually inaccessible to millions of women nationwide.

Today, nearly 90 percent of U.S. counties provide no abortion services. Thirty-nine states prohibit abortions after a specified point in pregnancy, and 36 states have "parental consent laws" requiring one or both parents of women under 18 to be notified and/or approve of the abortion. Meanwhile, billboards across the U.S. extol phony "crisis pregnancy centers." Far outnumbering abortion clinics, the "crisis centers" have been set up by "right-to-life" outfits to coerce women to carry their fetuses to term.

Behind the war on abortion rights is the oppression of women, which is rooted in the family and reinforced by religious backwardness. The institution of the family originated in early class society as a means to guarantee the inheritance of property, requiring women's monogamy. Under capitalism, the family is necessary both to rear the next generation of workers and to inculcate social conservatism, from puritanical sexual norms to subservience to authority. The increasing restrictions on abortion—a basic medical procedure safer than childbirth—pressure countless women into bearing children against their will. As revolutionary communists, we defend abortion rights along with every other gain for women, the working class, blacks and immigrants, no matter how partial. We fight for free contraception and free, safe abortion on demand as part of the struggle for free, quality health care for all.

In the first half of this year, states have enacted *80* new laws restricting abortion, a record number. A South Dakota law mandates that women seeking abortions undergo a cruel 72-hour waiting period and visit a "crisis pregnancy center," where they will be counseled on concocted "risk factors," like the lie that abortion causes breast cancer. A law going through the Ohio state legislature would ban abortion once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, which can be as early as six weeks. This would virtually eliminate abortion as an option, since many women don't even find out they are pregnant until that time. Fourteen states have restrictions on insurance coverage of abortion, and many more are threatening to do the same.

With fewer and fewer doctors performing abortions and no money to pay for them, many poor and working-class women resort to desperate measures, including dangerous back-alley abortions and even suicide. In this lengthy period of social reaction, fetuses are granted more rights than pregnant women. Bogus "feticide" laws, which exist at both the federal level and in at least 38 states, have been used to arrest women whose pregnancies have been terminated, whether intentionally or by accident.

Korotzer/NLN

**June 2009 NYC vigil for murdered abortion doctor George Tiller.**

In 2010, a woman in Iowa was arrested for falling down the stairs and losing her fetus; she was released when cops found out she was only in her second trimester, not the third, when criminal charges would have applied. In Utah the year before, a 17-year-old girl seven months into pregnancy, who was living in a house with no electricity or running water and with no access to transportation, paid a man $150 to beat her up in an attempt to cause a miscarriage. Initially the teenager was charged with "criminal solicitation of murder." Although the case was later dismissed, a state bill was proposed that would impose criminal penalties if a woman's "reckless" behavior caused a miscarriage. Earlier this year in Indianapolis, Bei Bei Shuai, a distraught pregnant woman who tried to kill herself, was thrown in jail when she survived the suicide attempt but the fetus did not. Accused of murder, she has recently been denied bail. We demand that all charges against Bei Bei Shuai be dropped and that she be released immediately!

Among those leading the anti-woman onslaught are the bible-thumping Republican right wingers, who write Christian "morality" into practically every aspect of their political platform, including preaching "abstinence only" education and the nonsense that an "unborn child" has a fundamental "individual right to life." Tea Party types who months ago spewed anti-immigrant rants in calling to amend or repeal the Fourteenth Amendment, which grants citizenship to those born in the U.S., staunchly uphold the Fourteenth Amendment as applying to "unborn children"!

The in-your-face anti-woman bigotry of the Republicans allows the Democrats to sell themselves as the "pro-choice" party. But it was the Democrats' health care "reform" that made good on Obama's promise that no federal dollars would be used to fund abortion, continuing the tradition of the Hyde Amendment enacted under Democrat Jimmy Carter in 1977 that eliminated Medicaid funding for abortions. Obama has declared his support for prohibitions on late-term abortions and upholds federal "conscience laws" allowing medical professionals to refuse to perform abortions because of their religious beliefs. This year, Congressional Democrats agreed to defund the Title Ten program, effectively cutting $17 million in federal money from reproductive health organizations, particularly affecting Planned Parenthood.

As Dr. Carhart noted in a 2010 interview with National Public Radio, "these same people that protest abortions are also against all of the things that would help reduce the frequency of abortion, including early education about sex, early education about the use of birth control, availability of birth control, availability of school education about intercourse and about sex." Lack of affordable contraception is especially the case for poor and minority women, who have the majority of unplanned pregnancies and correspondingly undergo the majority of abortions. Forty-two percent of women obtaining abortions have incomes below the federal poverty level, and black women are almost five times more likely to have an abortion than white women.

The attacks on abortion rights have fallen especially hard on black women, who are already ground down by the entrenched racial oppression and anti-woman bigotry of American capitalist society. In a climate of sharply increased religiosity, those attacks are aided by "right-to-life" black preachers and petty-bourgeois religious "empowerment" types, who recycle the decades-old smear that black women's abortions amount to "genocide" and promote the garbage that abortion is the "number one killer in the black community." As part of an anti-abortion billboard campaign in major U.S. cities, an outfit called the Radiance Foundation, based in Georgia, has plastered pictures of a black baby under the heading, "Endangered Species." The group Life Always, founded by a black Texas pastor, has posted a sign reading, "The Most Dangerous Place for African Americans Is in the Womb."

This lie is not only sick and grotesque; it whitewashes the reality that the "most dangerous place" for black people is this capitalist society. Youth in ghetto wastelands daily risk being shot by trigger-happy cops or rounded up in the racist "war on drugs" and sent to prison hellholes. Their "life" is one of poverty, unemployment, jail-like schools, crumbling houses and disappearing social services. Taking a page from the racist ruling class, which has vituperated against ghetto women as "unfit mothers" and "welfare queens," these reactionary demagogues blame black women for their own oppression.

The anti-abortion offensive is part of a generalized assault on the rights and living conditions of working people, from union-busting and mass layoffs to skyrocketing medical costs and the chipping away of even the most minimal social safety net. What is urgently needed is a ***class-struggle fight*** to defend and extend women's rights, including abortion, linked to a fight for quality medical care and jobs for all. It is the working class that has the potential, under the leadership of a revolutionary party, to carry out a socialist revolution that will sweep away the racist capitalist order and forge a new collective society run in the interests of the working people. This is the only road to the liberation of women and the emancipation of black people.

After the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the proletarian overthrow of the capitalist order in Russia in 1917, the Soviet government issued a decree overturning criminal penalties for abortion—the first government in the world to do so. Despite the country's deep poverty and social backwardness, the revolutionary regime took initial steps to replace the institution of the family with socialized laundries and dining halls, along with free childcare, aiming to liberate women from the drudgery and isolation of housekeeping and child rearing.

A summary report of a speech by Bolshevik leader Inessa Armand to the First International Conference of Communist Women, printed in 1921, powerfully expressed the communist perspective for women's emancipation: "The struggle for the liberation of women is an inseparable part of the general struggle for the dictatorship of the working class and must give to the final fight millions of reserves from the most backward, most forgotten and oppressed, most humiliated layers of the working class and the toiling poor from the women's army of labor" (quoted in "Communist International Theses on Work Among Women," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 62, Spring 2011). ■

# Barbaric Mutilation of Bangladeshi Woman

*The following article is reprinted from* Spartacist Canada *No. 170 (Fall 2011), newspaper of the Trotskyist League of Canada, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

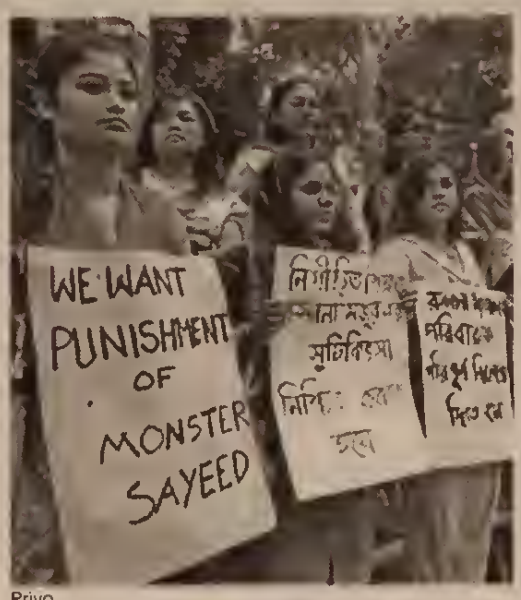
SPARTACIST CANADA

On June 5, in the city of Dhaka, Bangladesh, 33-year-old Rumana Monzur was permanently blinded and disfigured by her husband. For 25 long minutes, he tortured Rumana, gouging out her eyes and chewing off her nose and parts of her face. An assistant professor in international relations at Dhaka University, Rumana has been pursuing a master's degree in political science at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver. She returned home to Dhaka in May to visit her family, including her five-year-old daughter, while completing her thesis. This attempt on her life was intended to put a stop to Rumana's academic career; in her own words, "he hated the idea that I would become educated."

Reportedly, it was only after the Dhaka University teachers union in Bangladesh threatened to strike that Rumana's husband Hassan Sayed was arrested on June 15. He has now been charged with attempted murder. His arrest came on the heels of June 14 protests by students and teachers at the university who organized two human chains and a march through the campus. In view of the danger of making her story public, protesters also demanded security for Rumana's family. Additional calls were made for the government and Dhaka University to pay her medical bills. Because of the publicity surrounding this horrific crime, Rumana was able to receive medical care in India and Canada, but attempts to save her vision were tragically in vain. She has now been granted temporary residence in Canada, along with some of her immediate family.

Her story also sparked outrage in Canada. On June 26, students at St. John's College, the UBC residence where Rumana had been living, organized a 300-strong rally. The protest drew students, teachers, trade unionists and women's organizations, as well as supporters of the Trotskyist League. Placards carried included "Justice for Rumana" and "Respect Women's Right to Education."

At the rally and in Canadian newspaper articles some feminists insisted that the attack had nothing to do with religion and was purely a "domestic violence" issue, claiming that to say otherwise would be racist. It is true that violence against



Priyo

Province

**Left: Dhaka University students protest on June 13 in support of Rumana Monzur (above), an assistant professor at the university who was blinded in attack by husband.**

women occurs in all societies, crossing class, religious and national bounds, but what happened to Rumana had all the markings of an attempted "honour killing." There have been countless such murders in the Near East, in South and Central Asia as well as in many imperialist countries. These brutal crimes grow out of the clash between a woman's desire for independence from "traditional" culture and the legacy of pre-capitalist social and economic norms that persist in large swathes of the world.

The attack on Rumana is reminiscent of the murder of 17-year-old Aqsa Parvez at the hands of her father in suburban Toronto four years ago, and of the series of brutal murders of Sikh women in B.C. [British Columbia] by their husbands and other relatives. Aqsa had refused to wear the Islamic *hijab* (headscarf); a pattern among the Sikh women was that their relative economic independence, with jobs as teachers, nurses, software engineers, etc., clashed with traditional Sikh society, where arranged marriages and dowry are the norm. In Rumana's case, her academic pursuits and independent life abroad were similarly at odds with traditional Muslim culture.

Such crimes highlight the explosive mixture of women's oppression and anti-immigrant racism in Canada today. We denounce attempts by racist reactionaries and capitalist politicians to exploit these horrible murders in order to fuel anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim bigotry. Racist hysteria against Muslims has been the domestic fuel of the rulers' "war on terror," which has seen countless frame-ups, detentions, people "rendered" to other countries to be tortured and a sustained assault on the rights of everyone. As an extension of the "war on terror," veiled Muslim women have been repeatedly scapegoated.

We sharply oppose this racist ruling-class drive against Muslims and other minorities. At the same time we strongly solidarize with women who seek to throw off the strictures of religious traditionalism. Bangladesh, like the rest of the Indian subcontinent, bears the imprint of pre-capitalist social and economic norms. This neocolonial country is dominated by the dictates of the imperialist order while also subject to the tyranny of religious obscurantism; capitalist exploitation manipulates and deepens the ancient traditions and taboos.

The concept of "family honour"—control of a woman's sexuality by her family—is not the exclusive purview of Islam but occurs in a number of religions, including Christianity. It is the reflection of the treatment of women as the property of their husbands or fathers. This was powerfully captured by Friedrich Engels in his classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884): "In order to make certain of the wife's fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights."

Understanding the deadly consequences for a woman in Bangladesh if her "virtue" is questioned, Rumana's family solicited testimonies from classmates and friends in Vancouver to attest to her fidelity after her husband accused her of adultery to "justify" his torture. Such allegations have meant death for many women and young girls. This was the fate of Hena Acuter, a 14-year-old rape victim who was whipped to death in January following a "fatwa" issued by local Muslim clerics that declared her an adulteress. Since then at least three other Bangladeshi women have reportedly killed themselves after being subjected to similar public humiliation and torture.

In places like Bangladesh, burdened by centuries-old "customs," even basic questions of democratic reform can be explosive. In 1994 Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin was hounded out of the country by Islamic fundamentalists incensed by her fight for the rights of women, including to contraception and abortion (see "Women and the Permanent Revolution in Bangladesh," *Women and Revolution* No. 44, Winter 1994-Spring 1995).

In April of this year, reactionary fundamentalists staged a general strike in response to the government's National Women's Development Policy. The policy has drawn the fundamentalists' ire for its modest reforms to family law codes enacted under Islamic edicts. A number of left-leaning women's groups, including the Women's Cell of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, have rallied under the platform "Equal rights is our minimum demand." They protest the incompleteness of the government policy and demand a "unified" family law and equal rights of inheritance for women. Whatever reforms can be wrested from the bourgeois rulers, however partial, must be defended. However, reliance on appeals to bourgeois governments to protect women and create real equality between the sexes is a dead end.

Christianity and Judaism, in their many variants, also preach stifling moral codes to uphold the patriarchal family, the main social institution oppressing women. But these religions, though they had roots in pre-capitalist society, adapted to conform with rising industrial capitalism and the bourgeois democratic nation-states where they existed. The radical democratic principles of the Enlightenment were the ideological reflection of historical material advances over a backward, feudal society. As a religion Islam has not had to adapt, largely because it is rooted in those parts of the world where the imperialists have reinforced social backwardness as a prop to their domination.

The emancipation of women as part of the liberation of all the downtrodden of Bangladesh and the entire subcontinent requires a struggle for *permanent revolution*—the working class seizing power at the head of the peasantry and oppressed masses through socialist revolution, reorganizing society on the basis of collectivized property and fighting to extend the revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist centres. The best historical model for this is the great October 1917 Revolution in Russia led by the Bolshevik Party of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Such a perspective means taking up the fight against religious obscurantism and women's oppression. Bangladesh has a vibrant and potentially powerful working class with a significant component of women workers concentrated in the garment and jute industries. Such women workers will be a great motor force for the revolution. As Trotsky wrote in 1924:

> "And this, moreover, means that the Eastern woman who is the most paralysed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress; she will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas, a new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker." ■

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# Down With Racist "War on Drugs"!

# NYPD Rips Apart Black Families

You might not be arrested if the cops find a few grams of marijuana in your home in New York City—but they can take your children away! This is the racist reality faced by dozens of black families after police raided their homes and failed to uncover enough marijuana to prosecute them, only to call in the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). The children were then snatched on the pretext that pot in the home can be a sign of "neglect." Jose Gunnell of Harlem lost custody of his one-year-old daughter after an employee at a homeless shelter where he was staying found a $5 bag of marijuana during an inspection. Hundreds more parents are facing similar marijuana-related neglect allegations and risk losing their children. These cases—rarely if ever filed against white parents, according to defense lawyers—sometimes are based on nothing more than a parent's admission to a caseworker of past marijuana use.

The racist contempt shown for these black families is redolent of the practices of chattel slavery, when masters could break up slave families at will. An ACS spokesman defended snatching children, saying: "Drug use itself is not child abuse or neglect, but it can put children in danger of neglect or abuse." With this twisted puritanical logic, children are "protected" by being thrown into the city's foster care system. Last year, Mayor Michael Bloomberg merged the ACS with the Department of Juvenile Justice, so that "neglected" children put in the city's care automatically come under the violently brutal criminal justice system.

The breaking up of black families has gone together with skyrocketing arrest rates for pot possession, making NYC the marijuana arrest capital of the world. From 1997 through 2008, the NYPD arrested 430,000 people, mostly teenagers and young adults, for possessing small amounts of marijuana—*12 times more* marijuana arrests than in the previous 12-year period. The blatantly racist nature of this campaign was captured in a 2008 New York Civil Liberties Union report that stated: "U.S. government studies find that young whites use pot at higher rates than black or Latinos. Yet, NY City has been arresting and jailing young Latinos for pot possession at over three times the rate of whites, and arresting and jailing young blacks at six times the rate of whites."

The Spartacist League calls for the decriminalization of drugs. We oppose all laws against "crimes without victims"—from drug use to prostitution, gambling and pornography—which are at bottom designed to maintain social control. We also oppose drug testing in the workplace, which the bosses use as a pretext to go after union activists and cow the entire workforce.

Nationally, the "war on drugs" has been waged particularly against black people as well as Latinos, with hundreds of thousands incarcerated in prison hellholes. A drug felony conviction can close the door to higher education, well-paying jobs, housing and social services, compounding the already grinding conditions of life for the masses of American blacks, whose oppression is rooted in the capitalist economy.

WABC-TV

**NYC: Police stop-and-frisks reached 600,000 in 2010.**

The urban ghettos used to provide a reservoir of mostly unskilled labor for manufacturing. But with the shuttering of plants in recent decades, the black poor have been written off as a "surplus population" by the racist ruling class. The capitalists see no reason to spend money educating and providing for those they've thrown onto the scrap heap, instead serving up greater repression. Now impoverished black women, long demonized by racist demagogues screaming about "unfit" single mothers, are having their kids ripped from them for suspected marijuana use, without even being charged with a crime.

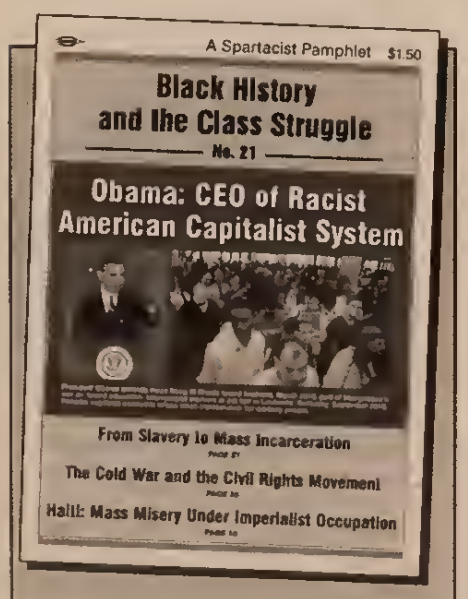
Drug busts are a big part of the "stop and frisk" policy, which has become the NYPD's favored tool in its daily harassment and dehumanization of blacks and Latinos. In 2010, the NYPD made *over 600,000* street stops, and the numbers are increasing this year, amounting to a more than sixfold increase since Bloomberg became mayor in 2002. In 2009, blacks accounted for more than half of those stopped by cops, while making up only 26 percent of the city's population. The NYPD has been able to compile a huge database containing personal information—and in some cases fingerprints and photos—of primarily minority youth, whether or not they are charged with a crime.

One of the opening shots in the national "war on drugs" was the passage of the New York State "Rockefeller drug laws" in the early 1970s, under which some 200,000 men, women and children were condemned to decades in prison. In 1977, those laws were altered so that the legal charge for possession of less than 26 grams of marijuana was reduced from a misdemeanor crime to a violation. However, having marijuana "open to public view" remained a misdemeanor. The NYPD has manipulated this distinction to haul in large numbers of minority youth. In their stop-and-frisk campaign, the cops often coerce their victims into removing any marijuana from their pocket or purse, making it "open to public view."

In 2008, the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a lawsuit against the City and the NYPD challenging the overtly racist nature of stop-and-frisk. City officials tried to get it dismissed, but on August 31 a Federal Court judge ruled that a trial could go forward. Less than a week later, black City Councilman Jumaane Williams of Brooklyn, a known critic of stop-and-frisk, was detained for walking down a closed sidewalk at the West Indian Day Parade despite displaying City Council identification. A video of the detention and assault on Kirsten John Foy, a black city official accompanying Williams, was posted on YouTube. These arrests were a clear message from the cops, who had complained of the councilman's "arrogance and ego," that black people, whatever their station in life, should "know their place."

In a statement defending Williams and Foy, Democratic Party Congresswoman Yvette Clarke evocatively compared the level of harassment of black people in NYC to South Africa under the hated apartheid-era pass laws. While ghetto youth being stopped by the police is as American as apple pie, black bourgeois politicians can see that their own children are at greater risk of run-ins with the cops when the net is cast so widely. In criticizing stop-and-frisk, their aim is to make the police more effective as an agency of repression. The police, together with the courts and prisons, are the means by which the capitalist class defends its rule and profits, employing organized violence against the working class and the oppressed. This does not change whether it is the Democrats, the Republicans or "independents" who sit in City Hall, the state capitol or the White House.

Under Democratic president Obama, the situation for black people has further deteriorated, with rollbacks of union gains, mounting job losses, home foreclosures and increased cuts in services. In NYC, the billionaire Bloomberg is adding to the pain by laying off teachers and running housing projects better suited for roaches, bedbugs and rats than humans. The decaying capitalist system cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the workers and the ghetto and barrio masses. We need a workers party built in political opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties of capital—a party that mobilizes the social power of labor, including its key black component, to fight against racist injustice and to champion the cause of all the exploited and oppressed. A revolutionary workers party is the necessary instrument to lead the struggle to sweep away the racist capitalist system and replace it with the rule of the working class, under which there would be jobs and quality housing and services for all. For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■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# Guatemala Under the Imperialist Boot

Su Friedrich

AP

**Above: Coffee pickers in Guatemala carrying their loads, 2008. Right: Migrants crammed into tractor-trailers on their way to U.S. were stopped in southern Mexico in May.**

Just a month after more than 500 starving, dehydrated immigrants were found huddled in two tractor-trailers in southern Mexico in May, several hundred more were detained in two similar incidents. The immigrants, almost all of whom have been deported back to their countries of origin, were mainly from Central and South America, with some from as far away as India and China. Migrant laborers such as these face enormous risks in trying to reach the U.S. Those who manage to evade Mexico's state forces risk facing the terror of the drug cartels before they can even attempt to cross the militarized U.S. border. The slaughter of 72 immigrants in northern Mexico in August 2010 is but one of the most gruesome examples of what may befall them.

Most of those found in the tractor-trailers were from the country immediately south of Mexico, Guatemala. What is driving this emigration are the ravages inflicted by U.S. imperialism: desperate poverty and landlessness, enforced by decades of murderous repression. The Guatemalan workers and peasants have suffered imperialist military intervention, the brutality of the venal local bourgeoisie and its U.S.-financed death squad regimes, and wholesale appropriation of the land by agribusiness giants like the United Fruit Company (now Chiquita).

Underscoring the effects of U.S. imperialist plunder was an article in the London *Guardian* (31 May) based on a report by Oxfam titled, "Growing a Better Future —Food Justice in a Resource-Constrained World." The article described the hopeless situation of a man working ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week, on a sugar plantation that supplies bioethanol fuel for cars in the U.S.: "His settlement in the fertile Pacific coastal area is surrounded by industrial farms, but he earns so little his family cannot afford to eat every day. Some days he survives his shift of hard physical labour on nothing but the mangoes that drop from trees by the roadside." The worker explained: "The money I make is not enough to feed us. We feed the children first because the girls cry so much when they are hungry, but it's not enough."

His two daughters suffer from stunted growth—now a widespread scourge in Guatemala, especially among Mayans and other indigenous peoples. Children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition at a rate that is the highest in Latin America and fourth-highest in the world. Three percent of babies don't live past their first year, the highest rate in Central America. Two years ago, hundreds died after a drought decimated harvests and famine swept parts of the country.

Yet Guatemala is rich in agriculture, one of the world's largest producers of sugar, coffee and bananas. The misery of the rural masses is rooted in the fact that the country's main productive resource, the land, is under the ownership or control of U.S. corporations and the local oligarchy. Barely 2-3 percent of the population owns more than two-thirds of the productive land, where cash crops are raised for sale on the world market. We observed in Part Two of "Imperialism Starves World's Poor" (*WV* No. 920, 12 September 2008) that precolonial societies based on subsistence agriculture suffered periodic famines and mass starvation resulting from drought and other natural disasters. But in the capitalist-imperialist era, starvation arises from the drive "to bolster the profits of the masters of Wall Street, the City of London and the banks of Frankfurt and Tokyo."

To defend the status quo in Guatemala, the U.S. has sponsored one death squad regime after another. During a 36-year campaign against a leftist guerrilla insurgency that began in 1960, some 200,000 people—mostly Mayan peasants—were killed and another 45,000 "disappeared." This year, in the run-up to the September 11 general election, there have been at least 36 political assassinations. Today, Guatemala is second only to Colombia as the deadliest country in the hemisphere for unionists. Five officials of the SITRABI banana workers union have been assassinated in recent years, including the union's treasurer, Idar Joel Hernández Godoy, who was gunned down in May on his way to the union hall.

Guatemala's bourgeois rulers are currently looking to strengthen their repressive forces in the name of fighting drug trafficking. Sixteen people were shot and burned to death on a bus east of Guatemala City in November 2008, while in May of this year 25 farm workers were beheaded near the Mexican border. Seizing on the murderous violence, which has spilled over from Mexico, each of Guatemala's top presidential candidates has vowed to step up state repression, from mobilizing the military to increasing the number of executions. The U.S. government has given millions in aid to the Guatemalan regime, as well as to Colombia and Mexico, to beef up military and police forces. These armed forces constitute the core of the capitalist state, an apparatus of organized violence directed against the working class, the peasantry and all the oppressed.

It was the "debt restructuring" programs forced onto Mexico and other Third World countries by the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist agencies in the 1980s that laid the basis for the rise of the drug trade by axing agricultural subsidies and social welfare programs. This was exacerbated by the imperialists' later imposition of the NAFTA "free trade" accord. The effect was that small agricultural production was wrecked and a mass of ruined peasants flocked to the cities to get by in the "informal economy" (see "Mexico: Down With 'Drug Wars' Militarization!" *WV* No. 953, 26 February 2010).

The massive displacement of the population in Mexico and points South has also spurred the rise in immigration to the U.S. in recent decades. From Los Angeles port truckers to North Carolina meatpackers, workers who have made the perilous journey to *El Norte* can enrich the U.S. labor movement here with their experiences of bitter class battles and U.S.-sponsored repression. The labor movement must demand a stop to anti-immigrant repression and must organize immigrant workers into the unions. ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!***

Der Spiegel

Jean-Marie Simon

**Above: U.S. president Eisenhower in 1955 with Castillo Armas, installed in power the year before in CIA-orchestrated right-wing coup. Right: Victims of Guatemalan army massacre of "suspected guerrillas" in 1982.**

## Legacy of the 1954 Coup

The history of U.S. depredations in Guatemala serves as a classic example of how countries in Central America and the Caribbean have been crushed under the imperialist boot and maintained as neocolonies. When president James Monroe declared in 1823 that South and Central America were off-limits for colonization by the European powers, the U.S. was in no position to enforce the so-called Monroe Doctrine. By the end of the 19th century, that had changed.

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# Cuba...

*(continued from page 1)*

under his brother and longtime lieutenant Raúl, Cuba's workers and peasants have gained enormously from the overthrow of capitalism. The elimination of production for profit through collectivization of the means of production, combined with central economic planning and a state monopoly over foreign trade and investment, provided jobs, housing and education for everyone and removed the yoke of direct imperialist domination. Cuba has one of the highest literacy rates in the world and a renowned health care system. Infant mortality is lower than in the U.S., Canada and the European Union. Abortion is a free, readily available health service.

The International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution. We call for an end to Washington's crippling economic embargo and demand that the U.S. get out of Guantánamo Bay. At the same time, we call on the Cuban proletariat to sweep away the Castroite bureaucraey through a political revolution, establishing a regime of workers democracy. This is the only way to redress the endemic corruption, inefficiencies and shortages due to bureaucratic mismanagement, which arrest economic growth and ereate huge dislocations.

Leon Trotsky's explanation of the material roots of the Soviet bureaucracy in his 1937 book *The Revolution Betrayed* can equally be applied to the Cuban regime today:

> "The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there are enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It 'knows' who is to get something and who has to wait."

From the inception of the Cuban workers state, the ruling bureaucracy has acted as an obstacle to the further advance toward socialism—a classless, egalitarian society requiring qualitatively higher levels of produetion than even the most advanced capitalist country. Instead the Stalinists purvey the myth of "socialism in one eountry," which in practice means opposition to the perspeetive of workers revolution internationally and accommodation to world imperialism and its neocolonial clients through a policy of "peaceful coexistence."

A Cuba ruled by elected workers and peasants councils—open to all parties that defend the revolution—would be a beacon for working people throughout Latin America and beyond. The ultimate answer to Cuba's economic backwardness and the only road to a future of material abundance, social equality and personal freedom is international proletarian revolution—not least in the U.S. imperialist bastion—leading to rational global economic planning and an egalitarian socialist order. The necessary corollary to this perspective is the forging of a Trotskyist party in Cuba, part of a reborn Fourth International, to lead a proletarian political revolution to victory.

## The "Special Period" and Bureaucratic "Reform"

While the proposed "market reforms" are deepgoing, the kind of policies they represent are hardly new for Cuba. Starting around 1993, i.e., shortly after the destruction of the Soviet Union, the Castro regime undertook a set of market-oriented policies to address the self-described "Special Period." These included the legalization of self-employment and individual U.S. dollar holdings and a major expansion of foreign tourism, including through joint ventures.

The most dramatic effect of these measures was to greatly increase inequality on the island. Amid pervasive petty and not so petty corruption, the scramble for hard currency has come to dominate the lives of Cuba's working people. Under the country's dual currency system, workers are paid in domestic Cuban pesos, but most goods can only be purchased in special stores or on the black market using a currency called the convertible peso (CUC), which is valued at 24 Cuban pesos and is the currency used by tourists. This has forced most workers to take on second or third jobs to secure basic needs, in turn greatly affecting labor productivity. Cuba has also witnessed a resurgence of prostitution.

Those with aecess to hard currency through remittances from abroad, the tourist industry or other means now have much higher living standards than other Cubans. Among the latter are most Cuban blacks, who are far less likely to have relatives in Miami and are underrepresented in johs in the tourist sector. While black people gained tremendously from the Cuban Revolution, many of these advances are being rolled back.

Beginning in 1996, Cuba managed to emerge from the depths of the Special Period and achieved some economic growth, albeit from a low base. In 2002, some 40 percent of the sugar mills, whose produce had earlier largely been exported to the USSR, were shut down in an attempt to diversify agriculture and feed the population. But with a continued lack of equipment and fuel and amid considerable disorganization, food production continued to stagnate. By 2006, 40 percent of the trueks available to the state agency responsible for procuring and distributing agricultural produce were out of service, and the rest were at least 20 years old.

Getty

**Cobbler in Havana, 2010. Stalinist regime encourages petty entrepreneurs while preparing to shed jobs in state industry.**

With half of all agricultural land still unproductive, Cuba has to import 80 percent of its food, much of it from the U.S. An article by University of Glasgow professor Brian Pollitt summarizes the dire situation: "While Cuba's sugar exports alone could finance the island's total food imports some four times over in 1989, during the years 2004-06 her exports of sugar, tobacco, other agricultural products and fisheries combined could not finance even one half of her food imports" (*International Journal of Cuban Studies*, June 2009).

## The Threat of Mass Layoffs

The economic *lineamientos* (guidelines) approved by the regime are all about improving economic performance through harsher conditions for the Cuban people. They state that it is necessary to "reduce or eliminate excessive social expenditure...and evaluate all activities that can move from a hudgeted [state] sector to the business system." In 2009, the government ordered the closing of all workplace cafeterias, while giving workers a wage increase of 15 Cuban pesos (about 70¢ U.S.). Meanwhile, the meager package of basic foodstuffs at cheap prices available through ration cards is being further reduced.

The new measures seek to foster greater investment by European, Canadian and other foreign companies by easing restrictions on offshore real estate ownership, including 99-year leases, and legalizing the sale and purchase of homes. Greater direct foreign investment through joint ventures and special economic zones is also contemplated. The reforms aim to eneourage the growth of the hitherto very constrained private sector by various means: lifting restrictions on self-employment; loosening controls on the sale of private agricultural produce; and formalizing the existenee of small private businesses in an attempt to regulate and tax thc informal economy. These businesses will be allowed to hire labor outside their own families for the first time since 1968. Such measures can only lead to even greater inequality. They will also serve to increase the economic influence of right-wing Cuban exiles, as Cubans with families in the U.S. will be among the few with enough capital to launch businesses.

The campaign by a sector of the U.S. imperialists (centered in agribusiness) to relax the embargo while continuing to impose diplomatic/political pressure on Cuba points to another possible road to subverting the socialized economy: flooding it with eheap imports. This approach is in line with the long-standing policy of the West European and Canadian rulers. Cuba should of course have the right to trade and have diplomatic relations with eapitalist countries. However, this underlines the importance of the state monopoly of foreign trade—i.e., strict government control of imports and exports.

The government says it expects that 40 pereent of the workers who lose their jobs will redeploy into cooperatives, while the rest will be urged to set up small businesses, become self-employed or seek work elsewhere. A party document admits that a large proportion of new businesses could fail within a year due to lack of access to credit and raw materials. And the prospect of many workers getting by in subsistence occupations like food vending and shoe repair amid the ongoing economic troubles is grim, to say the least.

Wider autonomy is also being given to state companies, which will be expected to finance their own operations or be liquidated. As we explained in the context of the "market reforms" introduced in the final years of the Soviet Union, such measures impel state managers to compete with each other to buy and produce cheap and sell dear. This in turn tends to undermine the state control of foreign trade and further fuel pro-capitalist appetites among sections of the bureaucracy. As for the regime's scheme for "perfecting state companies" by linking wages to productivity, this is just another name for piecework wages, which serve to undermine the basic social solidarity of the working class by turning workers into individual competitors for higher wages. Under Stalinist rule, such schemes, which pose economic anarchy and greater social inequality, are the only available "answer" to the distortions created by bureaucratic rigidity and commandism.

## Origins of the Cuban Deformed Workers State

To understand Cuba's current predicament, it is necessary to examine the origins of the deformed workers state. The guerrilla forces that marched into Havana under Fidel Castro's leadership in January 1959 were a heterogeneous petty-bourgeois movement initially committed to no more than a program of radieal democratic reforms. Importantly, however, their victory meant not only the downfall of the widely despised U.S.-hacked Batista dictatorship but the shattering of the army and the rest of the eapitalist state apparatus, allowing the new petty-bourgeois government wide latitude.

The new government had to confront U.S. imperialism's mounting attempts to bring it to heel through economic pressure. When Washington sought to lower the U.S. quota for Cuban sugar in early 1960, Castro signed an agreement to sell a million tons yearly to the Soviet Union. The refusal by imperialist-owned refineries to process Soviet crude oil led to the nationalization of U.S.-owned properties in Cuba in August 1960, ineluding sugar mills, oil companies and the power and telephone companies. By October of that year, 80 percent of the eountry's industry had been nationalized. Cuba became a deformed workers state with these pervasive nationalizations, which liquidated the bourgeoisie as a class.

The forerunner of the ICL, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) of the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the early 1960s, was forged in the struggle for a Marxist perspective in Cuba. While defending the Cuban Revolution against imperialism, the RT sharply opposed the SWP's adulation of Castro as an "unconscious" Trotskyist and the program of rural guerrillaism associated with the *fidelistas* and, earlier, the Chinese Maoists. As we wrote in the 1966 Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League/U.S.:

> "The Spartacist League fundamentally opposes the Maoist doctrine, rooted in Menshevism and Stalinist reformism, which rejects the vanguard role of the working class and substitutes peasant-based guerrilla warfare as the road to socialism. Movements of this sort can under certain conditions, i.e., the extreme disorganization of the capitalist class in the colonial country and the absence of the working class contending in its own right for social power, smash capitalist property relations; however, they cannot bring the working class to *political* power. Rather, they create bureaucratic anti-working-class regimes which suppress any further development of these revolutions towards socialism. Experience since the Second World War has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of the Permanent Revolution which declares that in the modern world the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed only by a proletarian dictatorship supported by the peasantry. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat can the colonial and semi-colonial countries obtain the complete and genuine solution to their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation."
>
> —"Basic Documents of the Spartacist League," *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9

In the absence of the proletarian democracy of a state directly won by the working

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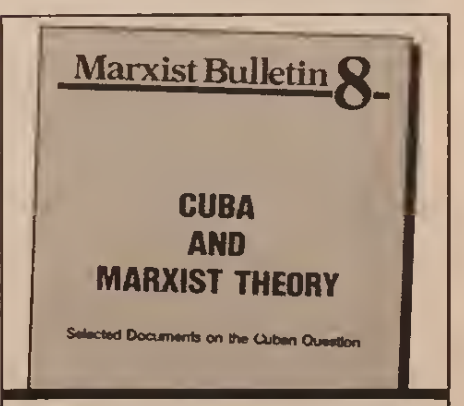


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# Cuba...

*(continued from page 7)*

people, the decisive section of Castro's forces made the transition to a bureaucratic caste resting atop the newly nationalized economy. By virtue of their newly acquired social position, the Castroites were compelled to embrace the ersatz Marxism ("socialism in one country") that is the necessary ideological reflection of a Stalinist bureaucracy, in the process merging with the wretched pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party, which had at one point served in the Batista government. The existence of the Soviet degenerated workers state provided a model and, more importantly, the material support that made this outcome possible.

The Cuban Revolution demonstrated yet again that there is no "third road" between the dictatorship of capital and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this sense, it confirmed Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. But the Cuban Revolution was a far cry from the Russian Revolution of October 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious urban working class, supported by the poor peasantry, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

## Cuba and the Soviet Collapse: Background to the Crisis

Contrary to the falsehood spread by various self-styled leftists that the USSR was an "imperialist" power, the Soviet Union was a workers state that issued out of the first victorious socialist revolution in history. Internationalist to the core, Lenin, Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders saw the revolution in economically backward Russia as the first step in a worldwide socialist revolution, crucially including the advanced capitalist countries. But the failure of a number of revolutionary opportunities in the period after World War I—particularly the defeat of the 1923 German Revolution—deepened the isolation of the Soviet state. This, combined with the economic devastation of World War I and the subsequent Civil War, allowed for the emergence of a conservative bureaucratic layer in the party and state apparatus.

Beginning in 1923-24, the USSR underwent a qualitative bureaucratic degeneration, a political counterrevolution in which the working class was deprived of political power. The nationally narrow conservatism of the consolidating bureaucratic caste was given ideological expression by Stalin's promulgation in late 1924 of the theory that socialism could be built in a single country. This anti-Marxist dogma served as a rationale for increasingly blatant rejection of Bolshevik internationalism—leading to overt betrayal of proletarian revolutions abroad, as in the case of Spain in the 1930s—in favor of futile attempts to accommodate imperialism.

Despite bureaucratic rule, the workers state's ability to marshal the economic resources of Soviet society through economic planning produced great advances, transforming the USSR from a backward, largely peasant country into a modern industrial power. That fact stands out ever more sharply today as the capitalist world is again mired in a global economic crisis. However, as Trotsky noted in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

> "The farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow. The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, ***quality*** demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery."

Growing economic stagnation, exacerbated by the need to keep pace with U.S. imperialism's massive anti-Soviet military buildup, came to a head in the 1980s. The regime of Mikhail Gorbachev introduced a program of market-oriented measures (*perestroika*), which precipitated the fracturing of the bureaucracy, including along national lines. In August 1991, seizing on a failed coup attempt by

Wide World

Sovfoto

**Left: Cuban militiaman guards U.S. oil refinery expropriated in 1960. Right: Fidel Castro with Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev at May Day parade in Moscow, 1963.**

Gorbachev's lieutenants, the openly pro-capitalist Boris Yeltsin seized power in league with the U.S. imperialist government of George H.W. Bush. In those pivotal days, the ICL issued and distributed more than 100,000 copies of a Russian-language statement calling on Soviet workers to "Defeat Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution!" But decades of Stalinist misrule had left the proletariat atomized and demoralized, and the absence of proletarian resistance to the counterrevolutionary tide paved the way for the final destruction of the gains of the October Revolution.

The false notion that the Soviet Union was an exploitative "imperialist" power is completely disproved by its support to Cuba, which was crucial to that country's economic progress. By the 1980s, the Soviet Union subsidized up to 36 percent of Cuba's national income, bartering oil and its derivatives for sugar under extremely favorable conditions for the island. The huge advances in Cuban health care and education were also conditioned by the Soviet subsidies, which in the 1970s allowed the country to open free public universities, including medical schools in all of its 14 provinces.

After the USSR's destruction, Cuban imports dropped by ***80 percent*** and its Gross Domestic Product plunged by ***35 percent***. With no Soviet-supplied fuel, machinery or spare parts, half of Cuba's industrial plants had to be closed, as the country underwent an economic collapse proportionally greater than the Great Depression in the U.S. We see here in the language of

Corbis

**Maternity ward in Havana. Cuba's infant mortality rate is lower than that in U.S., Canada and European Union.**

cold, hard statistics the historic gains that were made possible by the existence of the Soviet Union—and the disaster that unfolded with its destruction. This stands as a sharp indictment of the fake-socialist groups that made common cause with the Yeltsinite forces of imperialist-backed counterrevolution and now vituperate against Cuba's "market reforms" as a sellout!

## The "Chinese Model"

The introduction of "market reforms" has intersected and provoked hot debate among Cuban intellectuals on the road forward. Influential economists like Omar Everleny, deputy director of the Center for Studies on the Cuban Economy, applaud the proposed changes, arguing that they can bring modernization and indefinite economic growth. Everleny, among others, advocates following a Chinese- or Vietnamese-style economic model of encouraging foreign investment. Some others are concerned that "market reforms" might lead Cuba to the abyss, looking at the fate of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev's *perestroika* policy.

In comparing China to Cuba today, it is important to note that by the last two decades of the Cold War (the 1970s and '80s) China had become a strategic ally of U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s was a reflection on both sides of the counterrevolutionary implications of "socialism in one country." The Chinese Stalinists' criminal policy of allying with Washington against Moscow, which began under Mao, helped set the stage for the Deng Xiaoping bureaucracy's opening of China to large-scale industrial investment by Western imperialism. In contrast, U.S. imperialism has remained implacably hostile to Cuba and shows no sign of easing its brutal embargo. This is despite overtures by the Havana regime, such as the release of over 120 right-wing "dissidents" beginning last year, in which the reactionary Catholic church played a crucial role.

Washington's hardline stance toward Cuba not only blocks American investment, it also constricts investment from West Europe and Canada, given the long reach of U.S. extraterritorial law. Moreover, Cuba has neither the pre-existing industrial base nor the vast reservoir of cheap labor that fueled China's economic advance over the past three decades. The idea that Cuba could successfully undertake an export-driven form of economic expansion via substantial imperialist investment is a fantasy.

Despite the pro-market measures introduced since the late 1970s, the main economic sectors in China (as in Cuba) remain nationalized and under state control. Large-scale investment by Western and Japanese corporations and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie has, on the one hand, resulted in high levels of economic growth and a huge increase in the weight of China's industrial proletariat, a progressive development of historic importance. On the other hand, "market socialism" has greatly increased inequalities, including the creation of a sizable class of indigenous capitalist entrepreneurs on the mainland, many with familial and financial ties to the Communist Party officialdom. This has made China a cauldron of economic and social contradictions and explosive labor unrest. Meanwhile, the imperialists continue to pursue a two-pronged strategy to foment counterrevolution, supplementing economic penetration with military pressure and provocations along with championing anti-Communist "dissidents."

## Cuban Bureaucracy: A Contradictory Caste

Against the views propounded by the likes of Everleny, others, both in Cuba and internationally, argue against following the "market socialism" model implemented in China, a country they consider to be capitalist or even imperialist. An example is the Liga de Trahajadores por el Socialismo (LTS), Mexican section of the Trotskyist Fraction-Fourth International (FT-CI), a split from the tendency led by the late Argentine political chameleon Nahuel Moreno. In a September 2010 statement on Cuba, the FT-CI writes: "Despite a 'socialist' and 'anti-imperialist' discourse, the ruling bureaucracy has for years justified the so-called 'Chinese,' or Vietnamese, 'model,' i.e., a program of marching toward a gradual process of capitalist restoration under the leadership of the PCC [Cuban Communist Party], and they are already taking measures in that direction" (www.cubarevolucion.org).

Contrary to what the LTS/FT-CI contends, there cannot be a "gradual process of capitalist restoration" either in China or in Cuba. Capitalist counterrevolution would have to triumph on the political level—in the conquest of state power. It would not come about through a process of ever more quantitative extensions of the private sector, whether domestic or foreign. The Stalinist bureaucracy is incapable of a cold, gradual restoration of capitalism from above. As the events in the Soviet Union in 1991-92 showed clearly, a major social crisis in a deformed workers state would be accompanied by the collapse of Stalinist bonapartism and the political fracturing of the ruling Communist Party. What would emerge from such a situation—capitalist restoration or proletarian political revolution—would depend on the outcome of the struggle of these counterposed class forces. The key to a working-class victory will be the timely forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party rooted in the most advanced layers of the proletariat.

The LTS/FT-CI treats the Cuban bureaucracy as if it were committed to the destruction of the workers state. Thus it states that Cuba's army, the Revolutionary Armed Forces, is "the vanguard of capitalist restoration" in Cuba today. This notion contradicts the very essence of Trotsky's understanding of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a contradictory caste, a parasitic growth on the workers state and its collectivized property forms. With its stifling bureaucratism, lies, corruption and concessions to capitalism, the bureaucracy certainly helps prepare the way for a possible counterrevolution. But to label it (or a section of it) "the vanguard of capitalist restoration" is an outrageous whitewash of U.S. imperialism, the Catholic church, the counterrevolutionary Cuban exiles, and right-wingers within Cuba like the "dissidents" of *Las Damas de Blanco* ("Ladies in White").

To cover its tracks, the LTS/FT-CI seeks to draw a distinction between the current ruling bureaucrats and Che Guevara, Fidel Castro's comrade-in-arms. Like many others on the left, the LTS/FT-CI lauds Che's

"internationalism," asserting in its article that he approached "a consistent strategy for international socialist revolution." Guevara's murder by the CIA in Bolivia in 1967 while leading a small band of peasant guerrillas makes him a heroic figure. But his peasant-based strategy, which has brought so many militants to tragic ends, was a flat rejection of Marxism, in no way distinguishable from that of other "Third World" Stalinist guerrillaists.

The LTS/FT-CI also endorses Guevara's economic policies in the early 1960s, when he served as Minister of Industry, against Cuba's more recent policies of economic liberalization and decentralization. No less than his fellow Stalinists, Guevara accepted the framework of "building socialism" on one small, poor and besieged island. What defined his economic views was a particularly voluntarist and utopian brand of Stalinism characterized by upholding "moral incentives" over material ones as a purported road to rapid industrialization. This led to gross misuse and squandering of material and human resources. In dismissing workers' aspirations for decent living standards as "bourgeois ideology," Guevara helped to enforce the Cuban government's complete political disenfranchisement of the proletariat.

The LTS/FT-CI's claim that capitalist restoration is underway in Cuba is designed to facilitate their dropping defense of the deformed workers state against counterrevolution, which is precisely what this outfit did two decades ago in supporting pro-capitalist forces in the USSR, East Germany (the DDR) and the East European deformed workers states. The LTS's cothinkers in the Argentine Partido de los Trabajadores Socialistas even raised the scandalous call for "the defense of the right of the German masses to unite however they wish, even if they decide to do so in the framework of capitalism" (*Avanzada Socialista*, 30 March 1990)! This amounted to a blank check for the capitalist annexation of the DDR by West German imperialism.

Bettmann

**Che Guevara, then Cuba's Minister of Industry, denounced U.S. Imperialists at Inter-American Economic and Social Conference in Uruguay, August 1961.**

Prensa Latina

**Fidel Castro with Chile's Salvador Allende (left), who was elected president in 1970; with Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega (right) in 1980s. Cuban regime endorsed bourgeois popular front in Chile and advised Sandinistas not to create "another Cuba."**

Sygma

### False Parallels to Lenin's NEP

Some academic apologists for the proposed pro-market policies in Cuba have pointed to Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), adopted in the Soviet republics in 1921, which allowed concessions to the peasants in the form of an internal market where agricultural produce would be exchanged for industrial goods. In his book *Russia: From Real Socialism to Real Capitalism* (2005), Cuban historian Ariel Dacal argued that "the great merit of this policy, albeit contradictory," was as "an alternative for development against capitalism" in non-developed countries. Such views are echoed by sections of the left internationally. Making heavy reference to the NEP, a statement justifying the Cuban reforms by the U.S. Party for Socialism and Liberation asserts: "This is not the first time that a communist-led government has reverted to the expansion of a private market" ("A Marxist Analysis of Cuba's New Economic Reforms," PSLweb.org).

The Soviet NEP was not a model for sustained development but a temporary retreat after the devastation of the Civil War in a backward, overwhelmingly peasant economy in which industry had broken down and was utterly disorganized. While the NEP did succeed in reviving economic life, it also enriched a layer of speculators, small traders and well-off peasants, who became a corrosive influence on the apparatus of the workers state. The early NEP legislation, drawn up under Lenin's direct guidance, had severely restricted the hiring of labor and acquisition of land. However, in 1925 these restrictions were greatly liberalized by Stalin's regime. Trotsky's Left Opposition, which formed to fight the growing bureaucratic degeneration, called to increase taxation of the rich peasants to finance industrialization and for the systematic introduction of large-scale, mechanized collective agriculture. By the end of the 1920s, as the counterrevolutionary threat from the new stratum of rich peasants and merchants brought the USSR to the brink of disaster, Stalin belatedly turned against his former ally Nikolai Bukharin and moved to collectivize agriculture, in his own characteristically brutal and administrative fashion.

Even as they implemented the NEP, Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks fought with all their might to extend the gains of October to the workers of the world. They built the Third (Communist) International to guide and unite the struggles of revolutionary Marxists internationally. Such policies are utterly counterposed to those of the Stalinists, who instead subordinate the interests of the world proletariat to their efforts to curry favor with "progressive" capitalist regimes.

### Stalinism: Class-Collaborationist Betrayal

Cuba's defiance of the U.S. imperialist colossus over the years has inspired large numbers of militant workers and radical youth in Latin America and elsewhere. But this does not mean that the Cuban regime is intrinsically more radical than its Stalinist counterparts elsewhere. During its first two decades under Mao, the Beijing regime was likewise viewed by impressionistic Western leftists as a revolutionary alternative to Moscow. We warned as early as 1969 against the growing objective possibility—given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union—of a U.S. deal with China, a prediction which soon came to pass. The bottom line is that whatever their particular immediate policies and pressures, *all* Stalinist bureaucracies are characterized by class collaboration on the international level. Differences in posture and rhetoric are explained simply by the degree to which these regimes are under the gun of direct imperialist hostility.

The foreign policy of the Cuban bureaucracy has criminally betrayed the interests of the working masses of Latin America. In the 1960s, Fidel Castro supported bourgeois nationalists such as João Goulart in Brazil and saluted the Peruvian military junta as "a group of progressive officers playing a revolutionary role." In the early '70s, he endorsed Salvador Allende's popular-front bourgeois regime in Chile, whose political and physical disarming of the proletariat paved the way to Pinochet's 1973 military coup and the massacre of more than 30,000 leftists and workers.

When the masses of Nicaragua, under the leadership of the radical petty-bourgeois nationalist Sandinistas, overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979, shattering the capitalist state, the road was opened to a social revolution. We said: "Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan revolution!" But Castro advised the Sandinista government to "avoid the early mistakes we made in Cuba," such as "premature frontal attacks on the bourgeoisie." The Sandinistas maintained a "mixed economy," which meant that the capitalists were never destroyed as a class. With the U.S. bankrolling a dirty war by CIA-backed "contras," the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie was able to reassert control a decade later, defeating the revolution. The net result of the Cuban leaders' policies of "peaceful coexistence" has been the continued immiseration of the Latin American masses and further isolation for the Cuban Revolution.

Prominent among the pseudo-Marxist tendencies that have given political support to Cuba's Castroite bureaucracy is the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) of Alan Woods. In recent years, Woods has been able to posture as a "Trotskyist" inside Cuba, including in occasional speaking tours. The precondition for such activities is the IMT's outright adulation of Fidel Castro and its adamant opposition to the Trotskyist call for proletarian political revolution.

The IMT has a decades-long history of liquidation into social-democratic or outright capitalist parties, from the British Labour Party to Mexico's bourgeois Party of the Democratic Revolution. Today, like the Cuban bureaucracy, Woods & Co. give political support to Venezuelan capitalist strongman Hugo Chávez and his supposed "socialism of the 21st century." They write:

> "The Venezuelan Revolution, together with Cuba, has provided a rallying point for the revolution in Bolivia, Ecuador and other countries. The initiative taken by President Chavez to launch the Fifth International, dedicated to the overthrow of imperialism and capitalism, should receive the most enthusiastic support of the Cuban revolutionaries. This is the hope for the future!"
>
> —"Where Is Cuba Going? Towards Capitalism or Socialism?" marxist.com, 17 September 2010

Chávez, a former army colonel, came to power through the bourgeois electoral process and rules a capitalist state in which the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and the imperialists continue to carry on a booming business, however hostile Washington has been toward his regime. His piecemeal nationalizations do not challenge capitalist private property, any more than did nationalizations by other nationalist-populist *caudillos*, such as Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico in the 1930s or Juan Perón in Argentina in the 1940s (see "Venezuela: Break with Bourgeois Populism! For Workers Revolution!" *WV* No. 907, 1 February 2008). In passing off this bourgeois politician as "anti-capitalist," the IMT does its own small part in keeping the Venezuelan working masses under the boot of imperialist plunderers.

Since 2000, Venezuela has been Cuba's main trade partner, providing oil in exchange for some 20,000 Cuban doctors and teachers. Cuba's present dependence on Chávez's ability (and desire) to continue subsidizing his populist literacy and health campaigns by importing skilled Cuban professionals is, to say the least, an extremely unstable basis for economic survival.

### Cuba at the Crossroads

In April 2010, a senior black Communist Party intellectual, Esteban Morales, director of the U.S. Studies Center at the University of Havana and a regular political commentator on Cuban television, wrote an article titled "Corruption: The True Counterrevolution?" He argued:

> "When we closely observe Cuba's internal situation today, we can have no doubt that the counterrevolution, little by little, is taking positions at certain levels of the State and Government. Without a doubt, it is becoming evident that there are people in positions of government and state who are girding themselves financially for when the Revolution falls, and others may have everything almost ready to transfer state-owned assets to private hands, as happened in the old USSR."

A month after the publication of this article it was announced that Morales had been expelled from the Communist Party; following an appeal, he was reinstated this summer.

The Castro regime asserts that corruption originates with opportunistic individuals who have made their way into the state administrative apparatus, while the

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## Spartacus Youth Club Events

**LOS ANGELES**

**Thursday, September 29, 6:30 p.m.**
**Meet the Marxists**
UCLA, Ackerman Union, Room 2410
Information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

**NEW YORK CITY**

**Tuesday, September 27, 7 p.m.**
**The Russian Revolution of 1917**
**How the Working Class Took Power**
—— Part One ——
**Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**
CCNY, NAC Room 1/209
138th and Amsterdam Ave.
(1 train to 137th St.-City College)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

**TORONTO**

**Wednesday, September 28, 6 p.m.**
**The Capitalist State: Racist Police Terror and War**
Location TBA
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

**VANCOUVER**

**Friday, September 23, 2:30 p.m.**
**Meet the Marxists**
UBC, SUB Room 42T
Information: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Visit the ICL Web Site:
**www.icl-fi.org**

# Cuba...

*(continued from page 9)*

core of the historic Communist Party leadership remains irreversibly loyal to maintaining the Cuban workers state. In fact, corruption is a *direct product* of Stalinist bureaucratic rule, and it seeps into every pore of Cuban society. Everyone knows that if you know the right person you can obtain the necessary goods, so why work hard for nothing? Only a regime of workers democracy can instill the necessary labor morale, prevent bureaucratic misuse of resources and check tendencies toward capitalist restoration.

The Cuban regime has tried to shield itself against criticism through periodic purges and "anti-corruption" campaigns and has at times reversed some of its own "liberalizing" measures. This is *not* because these Stalinists are irrevocably committed to the defense of the collectivized economy. The Havana bureaucracy is not a social class; its components do not own stocks in state industry and cannot transmit ownership of the means of production to the bureaucrats' heirs. Rather, it is a parasitic and contradictory formation balancing between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the Cuban working class. As Trotsky wrote of the Soviet bureaucracy, "It continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat."

A.I. Savelyev

**V. I. Lenin addressing Third Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, 1921.**

Insofar as the Cuban Stalinists' reform program creates a new layer of small capitalists, they will necessarily develop their own interests counterposed to those of the workers state. At the same time, it is possible that the regime's moves will generate significant popular dissent and that the political hold of the bureaucracy will start to fracture, providing fertile ground for forging a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party among workers and advanced intellectuals seeking a road to authentic Marxism.

In outlining the road forward for the Soviet working class in the 1930s, Trotsky emphasized: "It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy." The 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, laid out key elements of the program for proletarian political revolution, including:

> "A revision of ***planned economy*** from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.
>
> "Reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged!
>
> "The reactionary ***international policy*** of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism."

An isolated and backward workers state, even one much larger and more resource-rich than Cuba, cannot reach, much less surpass, the levels of labor productivity in the advanced capitalist countries. Only successful socialist revolutions internationally, particularly in the imperialist centers, can eliminate scarcity and open the road to a world communist society. The ICL seeks to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, as the necessary leadership in this struggle.■

# Guatemala...

*(continued from page 6)*

In 1898, the U.S. entered the imperialist order on the world stage in the Spanish-American War, taking over the Spanish colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. During the first three decades of the 20th century, U.S. imperialist troops intervened in Central American and Caribbean countries on nearly 20 occasions. In the military's baggage train rode the representatives of giant U.S. corporations such as the United Fruit Company. By mid-century, United Fruit alone controlled almost 5,500 square miles of land throughout this region. In countries such as Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica, which were derisively referred to as "banana republics," United Fruit's will was law. When banana workers in Colombia went on strike in 1928, the military gunned down strikers and their families in the town of Ciénaga, a massacre immortalized by novelist Gabriel García Márquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

In Guatemala, Washington engineered the 1954 overthrow of bourgeois populist president Jacobo Arbenz, who had attempted to institute such reforms as nationalizing some of United Fruit's land. Arbenz ordered that unused land, which included 85 percent of United Fruit's holdings, be purchased at its declared value and distributed to landless peasants. United Fruit countered that $628,000, its earlier valuation of the land for tax purposes, was not enough and demanded $16 million instead.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, CIA chief Allen Dulles, were connected to United Fruit's law firm, and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., was a big stockholder. But it was the context of the Cold War against the Soviet Union that underlay Washington's anti-Communist frenzy over Arbenz's modest agrarian reforms. Minor participation in his government by the tiny Stalinist Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT) was seized upon to launch a red-scare propaganda campaign to go along with direct backing for reactionary Guatemalan cutthroats. The CIA worked to oust Arbenz from within, while a ragtag army of a few hundred was organized in Honduras under the exiled Carlos Castillo Armas, who had received training at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas.

Key to the invasion's success was the bombing and strafing of Guatemala City by U.S. airplanes flown by U.S. pilots. CIA honcho Howard Hunt (infamous for his role in the 1972 Watergate scandal) starkly—and shamelessly—described the mission in CNN's documentary series *Cold War*: "What we wanted to do was have a terror campaign, to terrify Arbenz particularly, terrify his troops, much as the German Stuka bombers terrified the populations of Belgium, Holland and Poland at the onset of World War II and just rendered everybody paralyzed."

Abandoned by his army, Arbenz resigned, ceding power to Colonel Carlos Enrique Díaz. John Peurifoy, the U.S. ambassador, presented Díaz with a list of alleged Communists to be killed. Díaz responded by declaring his intention to release all political prisoners, including PGT members. Peurifoy ordered the bombing to continue, and Díaz was removed from office at gunpoint. A U.S. embassy plane flew in with Guatemala's new leader, Castillo Armas, and waves of bloody repression soon ensued. PGT members as well as peasant and labor leaders were rounded up and incarcerated or executed, and land was returned to United Fruit and the oligarchs. Three years later, Castillo Armas was shot dead, one of the "regime changes" that would be commonplace in Guatemala over the next few decades.

U.S. imperialism's "labor lieutenants" were active in anti-Communist intrigues in Guatemala, as they were throughout the world. American Federation of Labor operatives undermined PGT influence in the unions and recruited right-wing unionists for the invasion force. Guatemala was a training ground for the treacherous role that the AFL-CIO bureaucracy would later play in Central and South America through its notorious American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which worked with the CIA to destroy militant, left-led unions.

As we explained in "Guatemala—CIA's Mass Murder Inc." (*WV* No. 621, 21 April 1995), "Grisly repression is a fundamental feature of the U.S. empire, which repeatedly drives the workers and peasants in its neocolonies to desperate uprisings as Wall Street literally drains their lives to fill its coffers." In the early 1960s, nationalist officers launched a guerrilla insurrection out of disgust with the puppet government's subservience to Washington. In response, U.S. military "advisers" began training Guatemalan forces in political assassinations on a mass scale and other "counterinsurgency" measures.

As the U.S. launched Cold War II in the late 1970s and early '80s, it sent millions of dollars in aid to El Salvador's death squad regime as it was fighting against a leftist insurgency and armed and trained the contra reactionaries fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Some of the bloodiest terror in Central America was carried out in Guatemala, where the juntas' war against the guerrillas and indigenous populations of the western highlands reached genocidal levels. Trained and supplied with arms and helicopters by the U.S., the Guatemalan military carried out more than 600 massacres, wiping out villages and slaughtering unarmed men, women and children—sometimes hundreds at a time. The slightest social protest was branded as "communist" and "pro-guerrilla." The most bloodthirsty of Guatemala's military butchers, General Efraín Ríos Montt, declared: "We don't have a scorched earth policy! We have a scorched communists policy!"

### "Truth and Reconciliation" = Illusions and Impunity

Survivors of the U.S.-sponsored terror in Guatemala want justice for what they suffered. A common scene in recent years is crowds of Mayans gathered around mass graves as teams of forensic anthropologists dig up the remains of their loved ones. The markings on the skeletal remains provide testimony to the sadistic manner in which the victims were shot, hacked and bludgeoned to death. Several memorials have been established at the sites of the massacres, with lists of names of the victims and vivid murals depicting the horrors they were subjected to.

Guatemala's current center-left government has recently rehabilitated Arbenz, who will be recognized in the national school curriculum and have a highway named after him. But this is just whitewash for the murderous capitalist state apparatus that continues to bludgeon the working class and all the rural and urban poor on behalf of the Guatemalan bourgeoisie and its imperialist overlords. A few prominent figures have been charged with genocide, and some low-level military figures have been jailed. But key orchestrators of the military/death squad terror are still around, including Otto Pérez Molina, the likely new president. In one recent "reconciliation" measure, monetary "compensation" has been granted to the Civilian Self-Defense Patrols, the paramilitary forces that carried out some of the most horrendous atrocities! As one trade unionist put it, "How can it be that the same people that were massacred by these organizations have to pay them for the damage they've done?"

The horrors suffered by the Guatemalan masses are emblematic of the workings of capitalism in the colonial and neocolonial countries. But just as it has spread its exploitation and terror around the globe, the capitalist system has also spread the seeds of its own destruction by creating a proletariat with the capacity to seize the wealth accumulated by the capitalists from the brutal exploitation of labor. The only way out of the misery imposed by the imperialists on Guatemala lies through proletarian revolution in Central America and Mexico and, crucially, in the U.S. imperialist heartland. As we wrote in our 1995 article on Guatemala, "The tentacles of the octopus (as United Fruit was known throughout Central America) can be cut off, as in Cuba, but Yankee imperialism will continue to strangle the hemisphere until it is struck in the heart." This struggle requires the leadership of Trotskyist parties, sections of a reforged Fourth International.■


## SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S.
## Local Directory and Public Offices

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**National Office:** Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

**Chicago** ..... Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
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**Public Office:** 1st Sat. of every month, 2-5 p.m., and by appointment, 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

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slsycla@sbcglobal.net
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**New York** ..... Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
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slbayarea@sbcglobal.net
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# Longview...

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The ILWU demonstrated the power of labor that lies in its collective organization, discipline and above all its capacity to shut down the flow of goods. Working people around the country, whose unions, jobs, wages and working conditions have been ravaged in a one-sided class war that has hit especially hard during the current economic crisis, cheered the ILWU's action: *Finally*, a union is standing up and fighting back! To be sure, it is not easy to win in the face of the forces of the capitalist state. But it is better to fight on your feet than die on your knees! And when an important strike is won, it can dramatically alter the entire situation. In 1934, the San Francisco general strike that forged the ILWU and the mass strikes in Toledo and Minneapolis—all led by reds—set the stage for the 1937 Flint sitdown strike against General Motors and the rise of the CIO.

## Labor Traitor Trumka Stabs ILWU in the Back

The ILWU must not stand alone! Unions must be mobilized in concrete actions of solidarity, beginning with the Teamsters-affiliated Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen who drive the BNSF trains. Nothing should move in or out of the EGT facility! The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), which organizes longshoremen on East Coast and Gulf ports, issued a statement of solidarity with the ILWU, condemning the police attack on McEllrath and other union members. The Washington Federation of State Employees (AFSCME Council 28) did likewise, condemning "the management actions to break the ILWU at Longview or any port along the West Coast." It's going to take more than words to stop the EGT union-busters.

Outrageously, AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka has come out in *opposition* to the defense of the ILWU! Instead, Trumka is peddling the lie that what's involved in Longview is a "jurisdictional dispute" between the ILWU and International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 701, whose members are scabbing on the ILWU. Trumka's "jurisdictional dispute" line is the same one being pushed by EGT as a fig leaf for its union-busting. While the company went through a show of negotiating with the ILWU, it's been clear from the beginning that EGT wants a non-union facility.

In January, EGT filed a court suit against the provision in its lease with the Port of Longview mandating that the company employ ILWU Local 21 members, arguing that "the lease did not impose any obligation whatsoever upon EGT to utilize *union labor* at the terminal" (our emphasis). After longshoremen shut down the BNSF grain shipment in July, EGT turned around and hired a subcontractor which employs Local 701 labor. Ever since, these scabs have been crossing the ILWU's picket lines, while EGT cynically boasts that it is providing "local, family-wage" union jobs. Only a company dupe could buy this line.

The executive committee of the Oregon AFL-CIO passed a resolution condemning the IUOE "scab labor actions" at Longview despite the attempt by state federation president Tom Chamberlain to rule it out of order. In August, Trumka sent a letter backing Chamberlain, arguing that "the resolution should be considered void, and no action should be taken by the state federation under the resolution." Trumka wants the ILWU to call off its fight and submit to a complicated hearing under the AFL-CIO's provision for jurisdictional disputes. The only "jurisdictional" dispute in Longview is between capital and labor! And Trumka has taken the side of the bosses.

While the ILWU was fighting for its life in Longview on September 8, Trumka was a guest of honor at Barack Obama's "fight for jobs" speech to Congress. The AFL-CIO president is especially concerned that militancy at Longview could ignite a class battle that would threaten Obama's re-election. The *Wall Street Journal* sees the same possible outcome. In a September 9 editorial headlined "A Union Goes Too Far," this mouthpiece for the corporations and bankers declared: "If ILWU shops begin slowdowns in sympathy with the union in Washington state...the events yesterday will become a national issue demanding the attention of a President who is desperately trying to hold his union base together. This one is worth watching."

Mic Smith/Post and Courier

**January 2000: Charleston ILA Local 1422 prevailed against union-busting after facing down attack by hundreds of state and local cops.**

The price that has been paid for the bureaucrats' subordination of the unions to the Democratic Party—which less crudely than the Republicans represents the interests of the capitalist class—can be seen in decades of broken unions and busted strikes. Such class collaboration is a central obstacle to the workers waging the kind of class battles needed to defend their interests. The AFL-CIO officialdom's commitment to the Democratic Party is equally shared by the ILWU International leadership. But with the very existence of the union on the line, McEllrath has been propelled into an episode of the class struggle that is inevitable in a society based on the exploitation of the many for the profits of the few.

AP

**September 8: Port of Tacoma was shut down when ILWU members walked off the job in support of Longview union struggle.**

## "There Are No Neutrals There"

The ILWU's battles in Longview have starkly laid bare the irreconcilable class divide between the workers and the capitalist class enemy. But this is obscured by presenting it as a fight of the Longview "community" against a giant multinational conglomerate. The refrain of the old coal miners' Harlan County fighting song asks: "Which Side Are You On?" This question is being increasingly posed in Longview, where shopkeepers are under pressure to remove signs supporting the ILWU from their windows. The local newspaper ran an appeal from Cowlitz County sheriff Mark Nelson to turn in union militants involved in the September 8 struggle. Defense of the "community" has fed "outside agitator" baiting by the cops, directed against ILWU members from outside Longview, including McEllrath.

Illusions that the cops are just regular community folks are suicidal. The job of the police is to "serve and protect" the interests of the corporations, as was more than amply demonstrated in their brutal assault on ILWU picketers. Every hard-fought labor struggle in the history of this country has been a pitched battle with the capitalists' strikebreaking thugs, from cops and company goons to National Guardsmen and other scab-herders. Behind them stand the courts and other state agencies. These are all part of the machinery of the capitalist state, whose purpose is to defend the property and profits of the capitalist owners through the suppression of the working class.

This machinery includes the NLRB, which was created under the Democratic Party administration of that "friend of labor" icon, Franklin Roosevelt, to head off and co-opt the class battles of the 1930s. The NLRB exists to tie the unions up in endless legal machinations in order to prevent workers from using their collective power to organize, stop work and stop the flow of profits. Today, the suit against the ILWU by the NLRB—two of whose three current members were appointed by Democrats—is a brief for EGT union-busting.

The lie peddled by the union tops that the state can be pressured to serve the workers' interests is matched by their promotion of the interests of American capitalism against its overseas competitors. In a press statement, ILWU spokeswoman Jennifer Sargent said that the purpose of militant actions by longshoremen in Longview is "to stand up to a foreign company that's trying to get a foothold in Washington and undermine the grain industry." Agriculture is big business in America, and one of the few where the U.S. has a competitive advantage. But anyone who thinks that this has benefited U.S. agricultural or other workers is severely deluded. No less than their foreign counterparts, American corporations are in business for one reason only, and that is to generate profits. The workers have no interest in promoting the profitability of their "own" capitalist rulers, which is purchased through the increasingly brutal exploitation of labor. U.S. grain bosses are just as eager as EGT's non-American components to bust the ILWU.

For longshoremen whose very jobs are dependent on foreign trade—both imports and exports—to wave the red-white-and-blue "made in the U.S.A." banner is particularly ludicrous. Unlike the Trumka leadership of the AFL-CIO, the International Transport Workers' Federation has issued a statement in support of the ILWU. Whether or not the ILWU wins this battle might well depend on support actions by port and maritime workers throughout Asia refusing to handle scab EGT grain shipments. The ILWU isn't going to win such support by waving the flag of U.S. imperialism, which is soaked in the blood of countless workers and oppressed masses around the globe.

## Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party!

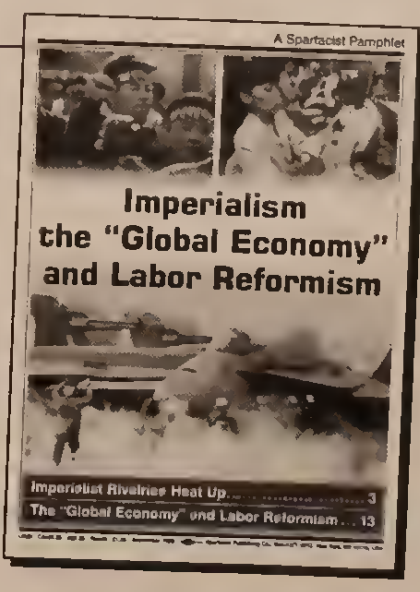
With their backs against the wall, the ILWU leadership has taken some bold action. The fight has been engaged and there's no going back. The strength of the union lies in its multiracial coast-wide membership. The Pacific Maritime Association bosses have long tried to pit one port against another, playing the overwhelmingly white Pacific Northwest locals, the largely black San Francisco local and the largely Latino membership in Los Angeles/Long Beach against each other. It is crucial that the union stand as one and fight to galvanize the rest of the labor movement in struggle behind it.

Trumka's treachery vividly illustrates the role of the labor bureaucracy as the bosses' agents in the unions, in which they serve as a central obstacle to working-class struggle. In 1921, in the face of an "open shop" offensive that was decimating the unions, James P. Cannon, then a leader of the Communist movement and later the founder of American Trotskyism, described the political program necessary to reforge the labor movement:

> "The 'open shop' campaign is one of the manifestations of a state of war that exists in society between two opposing classes: the producers and the parasites. This war cuts through the whole population like a great dividing sword; it creates two hostile camps and puts every man in his place in one or the other....
>
> "Let the unions put aside their illusions; let them face the issue squarely and fight it out on the basis of the class struggle. Instead of seeking peace when there is no peace, and 'understanding' with those who do not want to understand, let them declare war on the whole capitalist regime. That is the way to save the unions and to make them grow in the face of adversity and become powerful war engines for the destruction of capitalism and the reorganization of society on the foundation of working class control in industry and government."
>
> —"Who Can Save the Unions?" (7 May 1921), reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* (Prometheus Research Library, 1992)

In 1934, Cannon and his party would provide the leadership for the series of strikes in Minneapolis that forged the Teamsters as an industrial union.

There is massive discontent at the base of American society that can be galvanized through class battles like that at Longview. But to realize this potential poses the question of leadership. The current labor misleadership must be ousted and replaced with workers' leaders who link the fight to defend the unions to building a multiracial revolutionary workers party. The Spartacist League/U.S. uniquely puts forward the program to build such a party, the necessary instrument to lead the working class in the fight to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution.■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WORKERS VANGUARD

# Longshoremen Play Hardball in Longview, Washington

# ILWU Fights Deadly Threat

SEPTEMBER 13—For decades the unions in this country have been taking it in the teeth, their leadership lying down in the face of a union-busting juggernaut launched when the PATCO air traffic controllers were smashed in 1981. But on September 8, in the port town of Longview, Washington, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and their allies in other unions mobilized the kind of militant labor action that built the union movement in this country.

In the early hours of the morning, a picket of more than 500 unionists massed outside the newly built $200 million grain terminal of the giant EGT Development conglomerate, which wants to keep the ILWU out. Police who had earlier clubbed and pepper-sprayed picketers decided to take a hike. Faced with hundreds of longshoremen, the Longview police chief said, the cops had "used the better part of discretion." The company's security guard thugs also fled under police escort. Now EGT is complaining that grain cargo aboard a 107-car Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) train that had pulled into the terminal earlier was dumped on the tracks and that the train's brake lines were cut. Later that day, a federal judge who had brought down a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) injunction against "aggressive picketing" in Longview complained that he felt "like a paper tiger."

For months, ILWU Local 21, which has controlled all work loading and unloading ships in Longview for more than 70 years, has fought the EGT union-busters. In mid July, a mass picket of hundreds of ILWUers and other unionists stopped a BNSF train from delivering grain to the terminal (see "ILWU Battles Union Busters," *WV* No. 984, 5 August). BNSF suspended service to the terminal. Then, on September 7, the company tried to move in a train carrying grain from Minnesota. At the port of Vancouver, Washington, just up the Columbia River from Longview, the train was blocked by 200 picketers occupying the tracks. While the unionists temporarily prevailed, later that day the train was on the way to Longview, where 300 longshoremen and their allies massed on the tracks to stop it.

Attacked by riot-equipped cops wielding clubs, tear gas and guns loaded with rubber bullets, the picketers stood down. ILWU International president Bob McEllrath was brutally manhandled by a gang of cops. Calling on the workers to disperse for now, he argued, "You can get maced and tear-gassed and clubbed" or wait for the backing of other longshoremen. ILWU members were outraged by pictures of McEllrath being roughed up and detained by the cops—an attack reminiscent of PATCO leaders being led away in shackles. The ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Everett were shut down as union members walked off the job early on September 8.

Hours later, there were reinforcements on the Longview picket lines. EGT, its hired thugs and the cops got a real taste of union power. Even the *New York Times* (9 September) acknowledged: "The longshoremen's actions were a rare show of union militancy, reminiscent of labor actions a century ago." Today it was reported that two pro-union protesters have been arrested, one of them on four felony charges, with the police threatening more arrests. All labor must back the ILWU and demand that all charges against the unionists and their supporters be dropped.

AP

Markon/Daily News

**September 7: Longshoremen and supporters block train to stop grain delivery to terminal run by union-busting EGT. Inset: Cops attack unionists to clear tracks.**

Dawn Des Brisay

AP

**Left: ILWU International president Robert McEllrath being detained in Longview, September 7. Right: PATCO air traffic controllers union leaders hauled off in chains during 1981 strike. Smashing of PATCO set stage for decades of union-busting.**

The stakes in this battle are high. Negotiations for a new Northwest Grainhandlers Agreement between the ILWU and the giant conglomerates that dominate the grain business begin this month. EGT—a joint venture between St. Louis-based Bunge North America, the Japanese Itochu Corp. and the South Korean shipping giant STX Pan Ocean—is Bunge's first foray into the Pacific Northwest. If EGT gets away with keeping the ILWU out at Longview, it will be a declaration to other grain companies that it's open season on the union. A defeat at Longview would be a body blow against this powerful union, whose core longshore division contract is up in 2014.

Behind EGT stands the power of the capitalist state. In August, the NLRB filed for an injunction seeking to stop "aggressive picketing" at the Longview terminal and challenging the ILWU's right to the jobs at EGT. On the afternoon of the September 8 action, a federal judge made permanent the injunction requested by the NLRB, although he refused the NLRB request that all picketing be banned. Carrying fines of $25,000 per violation, the injunction was extended to cover the entire ILWU. The union now faces a "contempt of court" hearing. Nationwide, the hired pens of the capitalist media have unleashed a rabid, labor-hating barrage against the ILWU, slamming it as a pack of "thugs."

*continued on page 11*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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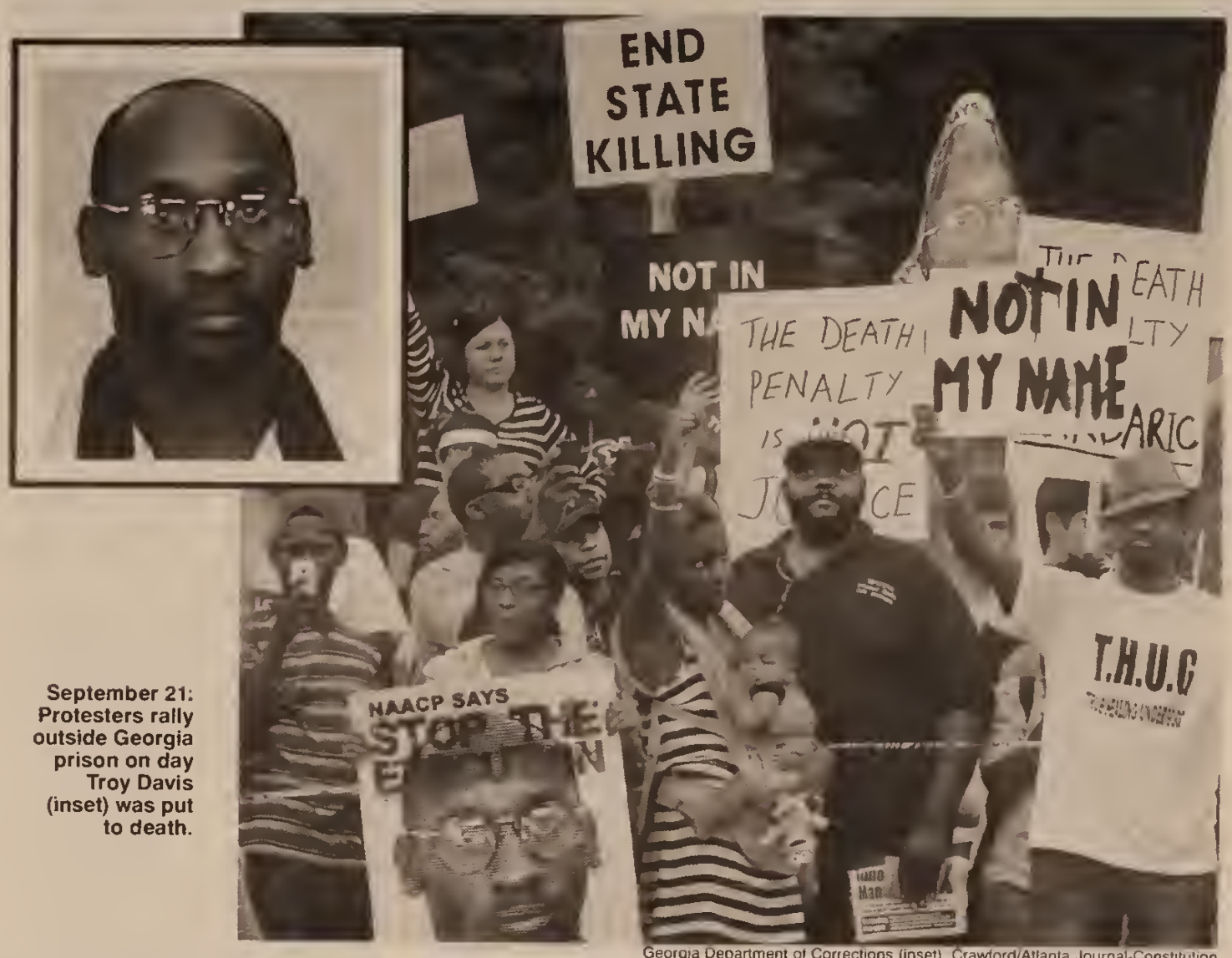
No. 987

30 September 2011


# Troy Davis Execution: Racist State Murder

Troy Davis is dead. At 11:08 p.m. on September 21, Davis, a 42-year-old black man, was murdered by the legal guardians of the capitalist ruling class. For 22 years, Davis fought to prove his innocence of the 1989 killing of off-duty police officer Mark MacPhail in Savannah, Georgia, only to spend the last moments of his life strapped to an execution gurney. For its part, the U.S. Supreme Court went through the charade of reviewing his petition for a last-minute stay of execution. As protests took place around the world, hundreds of Davis's supporters rallied outside the Jackson, Georgia, prison—officially known as the Diagnostic and Classification Prison—while millions followed the story on TVs, radios and cell phones, hoping for a semblance of justice for this black man caught in the American "justice" system.




**September 21: Protesters rally outside Georgia prison on day Troy Davis (inset) was put to death.**

Georgia Department of Corrections (inset), Crawford/Atlanta Journal-Constitution

***The killing of Troy Davis was racist legal lynching!*** In place of hooded KKK nightriders were pin-striped prosecutors and black-robed judges, along with the Board of Pardons and Paroles, which turned down Davis's bid for clemency the day before the execution. In place of the lynch rope were needles dispensing the life-ending chemical cocktail. The substantial evidence of Davis's innocence meant nothing. A white uniformed enforcer of capitalist law and order had been killed, and this black life had to be taken in return. Here is a stark demonstration of the workings of the capitalist state—an instrument of organized violence to protect the class rule and profits of the tiny handful of capitalists against the workers and the oppressed. The death penalty is the ultimate sanction of a "justice" system that is not only stacked against workers and the poor but also, in this society founded on slavery and maintained on a bedrock of black oppression, racist to its core.

The story of Troy Davis's frame-up is a familiar one for black people in this country. In 1991, he was sentenced to death after a frame-up conviction based on questionable "eyewitness" identifications, dubious accounts that he confessed and testimony coerced by the cops. Not a shred of physical evidence linked him to the killing. Seven of the prosecution's nine witnesses have since recanted. The only holdouts were a man who may be tbe actual killer and another who first denied being able to identify the shooter, only to finger Davis at trial two years later.

What sets Davis's case apart were the worldwide calls to stop his execution, ultimately including even former FBI director William Sessions and former Georgia Congressman Bob Barr—both staunch proponents of capital punishment—as well as the Pope and ex-president Jimmy Carter. Protests were beld in cities internationally following the signing of his death warrant on September 6. In the last days of his life over 600,000 people signed petitions on Davis's behalf. Just as a federal court judge last year dismissed evidence of Davis's innocence as "smoke and mirrors," the state authorities answered these calls for mercy with contempt.

Almost a century ago, Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs powerfully condemned the barbarism of the death penalty, writing in a May 1913 letter: "The taking of human life through criminal impulse or in an hour of passion by an individual is not to be compared to the immeasurably greater crime committed by the State when it deliberately puts to death the individual charged with such crime. Society may not consistently condemn murder as long as it is itself red-handed with that crime."

As Marxists, we oppose the death penalty on principle and everywhere—from the capitalist U.S., Japan, Iran and Russia to the Chinese deformed workers state. This principle applies for the guilty as well as the innocent. We do not accord the state the right to decide who shall live and who shall die. ***Abolish the racist death penalty!***

## Legacy of Slavery

Other than the U.S. and Japan, every advanced capitalist country has eliminated capital punishment as part of its criminal code. The European bourgeoisies are brutally repressive. But the continued use of the death penalty in the U.S. speaks to the particular depravity of this country's capitalist rulers. More fundamentally, capital punishment in the U.S. is rooted in the origins of its capitalist system, which was built on the backs of black slaves. Under the Slave Codes, blacks were killed with impunity for "crimes" ranging from insolence toward whites to rebellion against the slave masters.

This legacy can be seen today in the dungeons of death row. Of the more than 3,200 men and women there, over 40 percent are black, and another 12 percent are Latino. Among the 36 states that maintain the death penalty, California has the largest death row population. But capital punishment remains a largely Southern institution. Over 70 percent of executions since the Supreme Court reinstituted the death penalty in 1976 have taken place in the states of the former Confederacy—and more than half of those in Texas and Virginia. In Davis's Georgia, black males make up 15 percent of the population but constitute nearly half of those on death row.

Among those speaking out against the racist death penalty is the family of James Anderson, a black auto worker who was brutally murdered by white-supremacists in Jackson, Mississippi, on June 26 (see "Lynch Mob Murder of Black Worker," *WV* No. 985, 2 September). In a letter to the Hinds County district attorney, Anderson's sister Barbara Anderson Young asked that he "not seek the death penalty for anyone involved in James' murder," noting the family's religious opposition to capital punishment. She added, "We also oppose the death penalty because it historically has been used in Mississippi and the South primarily against people of color for killing whites."

The cheapness of black life to the American ruling class is evident not just in who is sent to death row, but also in whose loss of life constitutes a capital offense. Although blacks and whites are murder victims in roughly the same numbers, 80 percent of those executed have been convicted of killing a white person. Just hours before Troy Davis was put to death, the state of Texas executed Lawrence Brewer, one of three racist thugs convicted for the gruesome 1998 killing of James Byrd, a black man who was decapitated as he was dragged to death from the back of a pickup truck. While Texas has carried out over 470 executions since 1976, Brewer became only the second white person ever executed in the state for the murder of a black person.

The discriminatory application of the death penalty was sanctified by the U.S. Supreme Court 24 years ago in the case of Warren McCleskey, a black prisoner who

*continued on page 2*

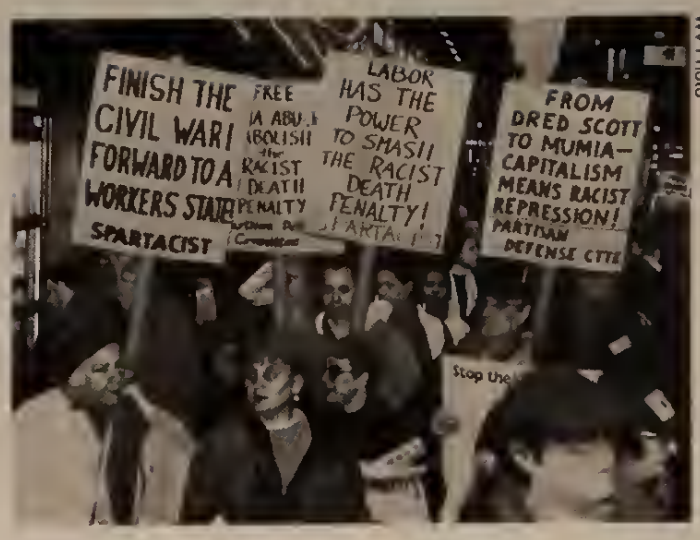
**Hue and Cry over China's Role in Africa ..... 8**

# Troy Davis...

*(continued from page 1)*

was executed in Georgia in 1991. McCleskey's attorneys presented the Court with an authoritative study detailing that black people in Georgia convicted of killing whites were sentenced to death *22 times* more frequently than those convicted of killing blacks. In rejecting McCleskey's appeal, the Supreme Court explicitly acknowledged that to accept this premise would throw "into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system." In its callous pronouncement, the court expressed a basic truth. McCleskey was a victim of the racism that pervades the criminal justice system—who the cops stop on the street, who the prosecutors choose to indict, what charges and sentences are sought, who sits on juries, who gets paroled and who gets executed.

The buildup to Troy Davis's execution sparked something of a public discussion on capital punishment in the bourgeois press, especially as it intersected the ascendance of Texas governor Rick Perry as a leading contender for the Republican presidential nomination. Earlier this month, Texas authorities had planned to execute four prisoners in the space of a week. Among those was Duane Buck, whose September 15 execution was stayed by the Supreme Court at the last minute.




WV Photo

**October 1998: NYC demonstration in defense of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.**

Convicted of killing his former girlfriend and a friend of hers in 1995, Buck was one of seven black men sentenced to death based on the "expert" testimony of a Texas prison psychologist that because they were black they should be expected to engage in violent behavior in the future!

## Death Penalty: Bipartisan Policy

At the September 7 Republican candidates' debate, Perry received a wild ovation for having overseen 234 executions. He further burnished his credentials by assuring moderator Brian Williams that this body count never cost him a wink of sleep. In an editorial titled "Cheering on the Death Machine," the *New York Times* (11 September) declared that Perry's "attitude about death may make sense in the hard-edged Republican primaries, but other voters should have serious doubts about a man who seems to have none."

There is no question that the sinister Christian fundamentalist Perry is an outright reactionary, one of several in the Republican contest. But the Democrats—the other party of racist capitalist rule—are themselves no slouches in administering the rulers' assembly line of death. Barack Obama, a supporter of the death penalty, refused to intervene as time ran out for Davis, with press secretary Jay Carney declaring: "It is not appropriate for the president of the United States to weigh in on specific cases like this one, which is a state prosecution."

Obama was not so shy about "weighing in" on the case of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther spokesman and a MOVE supporter who was framed up and sentenced to death on false charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. State and federal courts have repeatedly refused to hear the massive evidence of Mumia's innocence, including another man's confession to the killing. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Michael Smerconish, a right-wing Philadelphia journalist leading the calls for Mumia's head, asked Obama about Mumia's case. According to Smerconish, Obama replied by denying knowing much about the case while assuring him nevertheless that anyone convicted of killing a cop should be executed or imprisoned for life.

What to expect of the Democrats can be seen in the case of Shaka Sankofa, who was executed in June 2000 at the height of the presidential campaign in the face of international opposition similar to that which sought to stop Davis's execution. As then-governor of Texas George W. Bush and his advisers weighed the political risks of stopping the execution—or not—his Democratic opponent, Al Gore, not only reaffirmed his commitment to the death penalty but gave the go-ahead to execute a likely innocent man, declaring that "mistakes are inevitable." Eight years earlier, Bill Clinton interrupted his first presidential campaign by flying back to Arkansas, where he was governor, to oversee the execution of Rickey Ray Rector, a brain-damaged black man.

The liberals at the *New York Times* may be appalled that Rick Perry and the Republican right openly revel in state murder and indifference to the likelihood of killing innocent people. But Perry & Co. are only giving voice to what has been ruling-class policy—implemented by Democrats and Republicans alike—to massively bolster the repressive forces of the capitalist state. It was Clinton's 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act that cut off the possibilities of presenting new evidence of innocence by eviscerating the right of federal *habeas corpus* to overturn state death sentences. By 2010, the prison population had reached 2.3 million people, over half of whom were black and Latino, the majority convicted on nonviolent drug charges. In the calculations of the American bourgeoisie, the urban ghettos, which used to provide a reservoir of unskilled labor for the auto plants and steel mills, are simply written off as an expendable population, revealing the racist rulers' impulse to genocide.

While a widely cited poll shows that nearly two-thirds of the population continues to support the death penalty, there has been a drop in public support over the past several years. The fact that more than 130 people on death row have been proven innocent since 1973, including through DNA testing in recent years, has given sections of the ruling class some pause in the accelerated rush to execution, and juries have become a little more reluctant to issue death sentences. On March 9, Illinois became the fifth state since 2004 to eliminate the death penalty.

In their attempts to fine-tune the system of capitalist repression, liberals often promote the living death of "life without parole" as an alternative to state execution. A *New York Times* (12 September) editorial upholds life without parole as "a sound option" in capital cases even though it complains that this sentence is otherwise often misused. The *Times* pointed out that blacks make up 56.4 percent of those serving life without parole in the U.S. but only 37.5 percent of the country's prison population. This statistic further underscores that there can be no fair or "humane" system of "justice" for minorities or for the working class as a whole in a society based on the exploitation of labor and maintained through the special oppression of black people.

While the face of death row is now primarily black and Latino, figbters for labor's cause have also been targeted for death by the capitalist state: the Haymarket anarchists, labor organizers who fought for the eight-hour day and were put to death in 1877; IWW organizer Joe Hill, executed in 1915; anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti, who died in the electric chair in 1927. This ruling-class venom toward those perceived as challenging their oppressive rule is seen today in the death sentence hanging over the head of Mumia, a prize-winning journalist renowned as a powerful voice for the oppressed.

Following the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, James P. Cannon, founder and secretary of the International Labor Defense, wrote: "It is the vengeful, cruel and murderous class which the workers must fight and conquer before the regime of imprisonment, torture and murder can be ended. This is the message from the chair of death. This is the lesson of the Sacco-Vanzetti case" ("A Living Monument to Sacco and Vanzetti," *Labor Defender*, October 1927). This too must be the lesson of the case of Troy Davis, whose murder at the hands of the state will be avenged when a workers party leads all the exploited and oppressed in a socialist revolution that sweeps away the entire barbaric apparatus of capitalist repression. ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

## Labor Struggles and the Capitalist State

*In fighting company union-busting, longshoremen in Longview, Washington, are confronting anti-labor laws enforced by government agencies, the courts and the police. Drawing some lessons of the successful 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike, Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon pointed out that many workers were learning from their own experience that the state was not neutral but was an agency of the capitalist class in suppressing labor struggles. He also explained that strike strategy and tactics must be guided by a realistic assessment of the actual balance of class forces in the concrete situation.*

This spirit of determined struggle was combined at the same time with a realistic appraisal of the relation of forces and the limited objectives of the fight. Without this all the preparations and all the militancy of the strikers might well have been wasted and brought the reaction of a crushing defeat. The strike was understood to be a preliminary, partial struggle with the objective of establishing the union and compelling the bosses to "recognize" it. When they got that they stopped and called it a day. The strong union that has emerged from the strike will be able to fight again and to protect its membership in the meantime. The accomplishment is modest enough. But if we want to play an effective part in the labor movement we must not allow ourselves to forget that the American working class is just beginning to move on the path of the class struggle and, in its great majority, stands yet before the first task of establishing stable unions. Those who understand the task of the day and accomplish it prepare the future. The others merely chatter.

As in every strike of any consequence, the workers involved in the Minneapolis struggle also had an opportunity to see the government at work and to learn some practical lessons as to its real function. The police force of the city, under the direction of the Republican mayor, supplemented by a horde of "special deputies," were lined up solidly on the side of the bosses. The police and deputies did their best to protect the strikebreakers and keep some trucks moving, although their best was not good enough. The mobilization of the militia by the Farmer-Labor governor was a threat against the strikers, even if the militia-men were not put on the street. The strikers will remember that threat. In a sense it can be said that the political education of a large section of the strikers began with this experience.

—James P. Cannon, "Minneapolis and Its Meaning," *New International* (July 1934)

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*

The closing date for news in this issue is September 27.

**No. 987** **30 September 2011**

This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom.

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# Imperialists Overthrow Qaddafi Regime

*The following article is reprinted with a minor factual correction from* Workers Hammer *No. 216 (Autumn 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

**WORKERS HAMMER**

The fall of Tripoli on 21 August marked the overthrow of the bonapartist bourgeois regime of Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi at the hands of the imperialist powers. Spearheaded by Britain and France and backed by the U.S., in March the world's most powerful imperialist countries unleashed a massive military onslaught. The assault on Libya carried out by NATO was authorised by a United Nations Security Council resolution that claimed the operation aimed to "protect civilians." NATO subjected Tripoli and other areas of Libya to unrelenting aerial bombardment while "special forces" carried out covert operations on the ground. According to a NATO statement, between 31 March and 31 August, the imperialist alliance carried out a "total of 21,090 sorties, including 7,920 strike sorties." These deadly bombing raids did not stop with the fall of Tripoli—NATO planes continue to pound areas held by forces loyal to Qaddafi including Sirte and Bani Walid. Several attempts by the imperialists to assassinate Qaddafi have so far failed but an intensive manhunt for him continues.

The imperialist bombardment posed pointblank the need for defence of Libya. In a statement we issued at the start of the bombing, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) called on workers around the world to take a stand for military defence of Libya against the imperialist powers, without giving any political support to Qaddafi's capitalist regime. We noted that the imperialist intervention, which had the blessings of the sheikhs, kings and military bonapartists of the Arab League, would slaughter countless innocent people.

Prior to the imperialist attack, the conflict in Libya took the form of a civil war, overlain by tribal and regional divisions, between Qaddafi's Tripoli-centred government and the imperialist-backed opposition forces concentrated in the east, a conflict in which Marxists had no side. But with the NATO bombing, the civil war became subordinated to imperialist military intervention. Our statement [published in *Workers Vanguard* No. 977, 1 April] urged: "Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step towards their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression.

ZUMA

**June 7: NATO terror bombing targets area of Tripoli including Libyan leader Qaddafi's residence.**

***Defend Libya against imperialist attack! U.S. Fifth Fleet and all imperialist military bases and troops out of North Africa and the Near East!"***

Prime minister David Cameron greeted the overthrow of Qaddafi by praising the "rebels," declaring that "free Libyan forces" are now in control in the country and that it is "now up to Libyans to shape their future." News media endlessly retailed the image of the anti-Qaddafi "rebels" celebrating in the streets of Tripoli and elsewhere. But without NATO, the "rebels" could not have defeated Qaddafi's army. The real value of the "rebels" to the imperialists was in providing a "humanitarian" and "democratic" cover for naked subjugation of a neocolonial country. Now these flunkeys are setting up a puppet government in Tripoli led by the Transitional National Council, which is opening up Libya's resources, especially its enormous reserves of oil and gas, to the imperialist vultures.

Defence of Libya against imperialist bombardment should be elementary, not only for proletarian opponents of capitalist rule but for anyone opposed to the strongest capitalist powers imposing their will on weaker countries through overwhelming military might. Not so for the bulk of the "socialist" left internationally, which served to line up workers and youth behind the imperialist murderers by championing the Libyan "rebels."

The British reformists take their cue from the Labour Party, which stood foursquare behind Cameron on the bombing of Libya. As shadow foreign secretary Douglas Alexander put it: "Labour has steadfastly supported the military action to protect the Libyan people" (*Independent*, 4 September). Following suit, the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) maintained its long track record of support to "democratic" British imperialism. In addition to a 23 March statement titled: "Why we should not denounce intervention in Libya," the AWL published foam-flecked articles denouncing the Socialist Party, British section of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) for their stated opposition to the NATO intervention. But while these social-democratic organisations offered pro-forma opposition to the bombing, mobilisations against it were pathetically small because as cheerleaders for the Libyan "rebels" these leftists lined up with their "own" capitalist ruling classes and welcomed the overthrow of Qaddafi.

The Socialist Party proclaimed the downfall of the regime "a victory for the Libyan people," but added a disclaimer that it was "also a success for imperialism" (socialistparty.org, 26 August). The SWP favoured imperialist intervention in Libya, but would have preferred an alternative to bombing. In March they advocated: "Instead of bombing Libya, Western governments could hand all the assets they have seized from Gaddafi's regime to the revolutionary forces" (*Socialist Worker*, 22 March). On this the reformists got what they wanted: in March the British imperialist gangsters seized a huge haul of Libyan dinars, the assets of a sovereign country. On 31 August the Royal Air Force flew 280 million dinars ($226 million) to the imperialist puppets in Libya, as a first instalment of the cash they had looted.

On the eve of the overthrow of Qaddafi, the SWP proclaimed: "Good riddance Gaddafi, but don't trust the West" (*Socialist Worker*, 20 August) while the article underneath said: "The end of Gaddafi's regime is a cause for celebration," while absurdly moaning that the imperialist powers "hijacked the Libyan revolt." Some hijack: the "rebels" were willing tools of the imperialists. They pleaded for military intervention and fed lurid tales to a pliant Western press of atrocities by Qaddafi's forces, including mass rapes of women, for which no evidence has been found. During the bombing of Libya, the so-called Libyan "revolutionaries" colluded with NATO, acting as spotters on the ground, calling in air strikes and pinpointing targets.

Reuters

**August 25: Black men in Tripoli rounded up by imperialist-backed "rebels." Many black African immigrants, accused of being "pro-Qaddafi mercenaries," have been arrested, often executed.**

### Bitter Fruits of Libyan "Revolution"

The anti-Qaddafi forces were whipped into shape by British and other imperialist "special" forces, the type of shadowy operatives who carry out hideous torture and massacres in Iraq and Afghanistan. An article in the *Telegraph* (28 August) positively crowed that, months before the attack on Tripoli, groups of young males secretly travelled to Benghazi "to learn the art of insurgent warfare from an international force of covert units composed of the British SAS [Special Air Service] and MI6 [spy agency] and troops from the French, Qatar and United Arab Emirates special forces." The British imperialists "covertly supplied 1,000 sets of body armour, advanced telecommunications equipment and night vision goggles"; while "hundreds of weapons, tons of ammunition and communications equipment were smuggled into Tripoli and hidden in secret arms dumps." On their return to Tripoli, the article claimed, the undercover agents convinced an officer in Qaddafi's army, Mohammed Eshkal, to open the gates of Tripoli to the imperialists.

For Marxists, the question of extending military support in civil wars and other conflicts is determined by whether the victory of one side or the other would further the cause of the working class and the oppressed. We refused any support to the anti-Qaddafi forces, which we described as a cabal of pro-imperialist "democrats," CIA stooges, monarchists and Islamists. Today there is a mounting body of evidence showing their reactionary character. "This is a bad time to be a black man in Libya," reported Alex Thompson on Channel 4 News on 28 August, and the bourgeois press is awash with stories of racist atrocities against black African immigrants. Under Qaddafi there were an estimated one million undocumented immigrant workers in Libya, which has a population of six million and a workforce of 1.7 million. Immigrants were subject to racist discrimination and attacks, including anti-immigrant riots in 2000. Today dark-skinned males are being indiscriminately targeted by "rebel" forces as "pro-Qaddafi mercenaries," which can mean summary execution. Writing in the *Independent*, Kim Sengupta described the bodies of 30 black men lying decomposing on the ground, noting that many of them "had their hands tied behind their back, either with plastic handcuffs or ropes." Sengupta continued that "the mounting number of deaths of men from sub-Saharan Africa at the hands of the rebels—lynchings in many cases—raises disturbing questions about the opposition administration, the Transitional National Council" (*Independent*, 27 August).

Among Libya's "revolutionaries," murderous tribal and other divisions are evident. In July their commander-in-chief, General Abdah Fattah Younes, and two of his aides were murdered, by rival "rebel" factions by all accounts. The Obeidi tribe, of which Younes was a member, blames the Islamists for his death. Ali Senussi, a leader of the tribe, told reporters that if the rebel government does not bring those responsible to justice, "the Obeidis are promising this will not go unpunished" (*Christian Science Monitor*, 25 August). Many rebel commanders are former Libyan army officers; Khalifa Belqasim Haftar, a former commander and veteran of Qaddafi's war against Chad, is also a CIA stooge.

The current rebel military commander in Tripoli, Ahdel Hakim Belhaj, founder of the now defunct Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, has caused a furore in Britain by complaining that MI6 provided intelligence on him to the Qaddafi regime as a result of which he was imprisoned and tortured. During this time the British secret service worked with the CIA and with Qaddafi's forces in the "extraordinary rendition" of prisoners. At the behest of MI6, Belhaj was kidnapped in 2004 in Bangkok and handed over to the CIA. From there he

*continued on page 11*

# 140th Anniversary
# Lessons of the Paris Commune

Illustrated London News

**National Guard marches outside the Hôtel de Ville following proclamation of the Commune, 28 March 1871.**

*We print below the second part of a class given by comrade S. Williams to the New York Spartacus Youth Club on the Paris Commune of 1871. Part One appeared in the* Young Spartacus *pages of* Workers Vanguard *No. 985 (2 September). At the educational, comrade Karen Cole discussed the work of the Women's Union for the Defense of Paris and Aid to the Wounded. On the facing page, we print her expanded remarks.*

*The first part of the class covered the background to the Commune, including the Franco-Prussian War, the end of Napoléon III's empire and the subsequent establishment and collapse of the Government of National Defense. On 18 March 1871, when Adolphe Thiers, elected head of the government by the reactionary National Assembly, sent troops to Paris to capture the cannons held by the National Guard, the workers carried out an insurrection. Shortly thereafter, the remaining elements of the bourgeois state and its supporters fled to Versailles; the Central Committee of the National Guard, despite having the leadership of the workers in Paris, called for elections.*

## *PART TWO*

Thus it was that the Central Committee of the National Guard found itself at the head of Paris, with all the material apparatus of power centered in its hands. As Trotsky put it, it was a council of deputies of the armed workers and petty bourgeoisie. But the Central Committee of the National Guard did not see itself as a central, revolutionary authority. Marx argued that, given that the bourgeoisie had only recently fled, was disorganized and had few troops, rather than calling elections to a commune the Central Committee "should have marched at once on Versailles," but "the right moment was missed because of conscientious scruples." That is to say, instead of destroying its enemies, the Central Committee sought to exert moral influence on them and the Versaillese were left untouched. This allowed them to regroup and prepare to later smash the Commune.

Other cities of France had already had at least one uprising since September 1870. After March 18, communes formed in Lyons, St. Etienne and a center of heavy industry, Le Creusot. However, the Central Committee and later the Commune Council were beholden to anarchoid ideas of "federation" and "autonomy" and as Trotsky noted, they attempted to "replace the proletarian revolution, which was developing, by a petty bourgeois reform: communal autonomy. The real revolutionary task consisted of assuring the proletariat the power all over the country. Paris had to serve as its base...to attain this goal, it was necessary to vanquish Versailles without the loss of time and to send agitators, organizers, and armed forces throughout France."

But despite these weaknesses the Paris Commune represented the nucleus of a workers state. As Marx and Engels noted, the proletariat could not "simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes"—the workers had to *shatter* the remnants of the bourgeois state and *replace* it with their own class dictatorship, the "dictatorship of the proletariat." And this is precisely what happened. On March 28, two days after the National Guard organized elections to the Commune, to the new Commune Council, the government of proletarian Paris met. Its first decree was the suppression of the standing army and the substitution for it by the armed people. It also transformed the state bureaucracy by lowering salaries and making all officials recallable at any time. A left-Proudhonist in the Commune, Jean-Baptiste Millière, described the Commune succinctly: "The Commune is not a Constituent Assembly. It is a military Council. It must have one aim, victory; one weapon, force; one law, the law of social salvation" (quoted in Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism* [1920]). Already in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels understood that it was necessary for the workers to run a state—i.e., the proletariat "organized as the ruling class." After the experience of 1848, Marx and Engels had understood that it was necessary to crush the bourgeois state machine, but what it would be replaced with remained abstract. Taking the Commune as a model, they acquired a clear understanding of what the "dictatorship of the proletariat" would look like.

I want to talk about what the "dictatorship of the proletariat" *is*. While the Commune was a ***glimpse*** of the future, a full-scale workers revolution was accomplished in fact only by the Bolsheviks in October 1917, when workers and soldiers, led by the Bolshevik Party, organized in councils—a bit like the Commune itself. They overthrew the capitalist class and founded the Soviet workers state, the most advanced social development in all of human history. Revisionists of all stripes distort the meaning of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in order to paint the Commune in the colors of a peaceful *bourgeois* democracy, thus rejecting the fundamental lessons of the Commune *and* the Bolshevik Revolution. The original spokesman for this revisionism was Karl Kautsky, a leader of the German Social Democratic Party and the Second International, who abandoned fundamental Marxist internationalism and supported his own ruling class during World War I. More recently, another revisionist, a now-deceased leader of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat, Daniel Bensaïd, recycled several of Kautsky's arguments (without crediting Kautsky) in a 2008 essay recently reprinted by *Tout Est à Nous! La Revue*, the publication of the New Anti-Capitalist Party in France.

To paraphrase, Kautsky argued that unlike the Bolshevik Revolution, (which Kautsky opposed and considered a "putsch"), "The Paris Commune was a dictatorship of the proletariat, but it was elected by ***universal*** suffrage, i.e., without depriving the bourgeoisie of the franchise, i.e., '***democratically***'" (Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* [1918]). Similarly, Bensaïd argued that the "form" of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in the Commune remained "that of universal suffrage." That is to say, they both try to reduce the Commune "dictatorship of the proletariat" to a question of general "democracy" and "universal suffrage." As Marxists we understand that there is no such thing as classless "democracy." While we defend the greatest democracy under capitalism, "universal suffrage" is a form of ***bourgeois*** democracy, i.e., it is a form of class rule of the ***capitalist class***. Both Lenin and Trotsky in their seminal responses to Kautsky (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* and *Terrorism and Communism*, respectively) noted that the bourgeoisie had already fled Paris at the time of the Commune elections and, while there were elections based on universal suffrage, these fundamentally reflected a *class* vote—that of the proletariat. What defined the Commune "dictatorship of the proletariat" was the suppression of the bourgeois standing army and the substitution for it by the armed workers.

To paint the Commune in the colors of bourgeois democracy is to glorify capitalism and disappear the key Marxist lessons of the Commune. When looked at on a ***national*** scale, "universal suffrage" did ***not*** represent ***working-class*** interests. The reactionary National Assembly brought to

Paris Révolutionnaire

Pierre Petit

**Military leaders of the Commune: Polish leftist immigrants Jaroslaw Dombrowski (left) and Walery Wroblewski. Below: Communards manning barricade.**

Combier

# Revolutionary Women in the Paris Commune

sopos.org (inset), Le Monde Illustré

**Women's meeting in church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. Inset: Elisabeth Dmitrieff, Marxist leader of Women's Union.**

power on February 8 was elected through "universal suffrage" and it sought to *crush* the Commune, which had overturned bourgeois class rule. In fact, at the time of the Commune there were some "socialists" who supported bourgeois democracy against the workers. One of these was a historic figure named Louis Blanc, who opposed the Communards because they were "insurgents against an Assembly most freely elected"! Such "bourgeois socialists" are the *true* predecessors of Kautsky and Bensaïd, not the Communards.

### Who Was in the Commune and What It Accomplished

One of the main problems once the Commune came to power was the influence of petty-bourgeois and anarchoid leadership, which meant that the different elements of the Commune shrank from centralism and "authority." As Trotsky put it, the Commune swarmed with "bourgeois socialists" and Marx complained that "the Commune wastes too much time over trifles and personal squabbles. One can see that there are influences at work other than those of the working men." Nonetheless, the Commune, having seized state power, was driven by this logic to implement measures in the interest of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie, sometimes in contradiction to the formal programs of its participants.

Who were the deputies of the Commune Council? There was a range of figures, from a radical bourgeois Jacobin named Charles Delescluze to around 40 members of the First International, most of whom were influenced by Proudhon (who had died in 1865) and to a much lesser extent by Mikhail Bakunin. (Bakunin's main contribution in 1870-71 was to try to lead an uprising in Lyons in late September 1870: there he declared the bourgeois state abolished, after which the state promptly crushed his uprising.) There were also some supporters of Auguste Blanqui in the Commune, as well as other diverse elements like the petty-bourgeois adventurer and slanderer of Marx, Félix Pyat, from whom the International had publicly disassociated itself in 1870.

Léo Frankel, a collaborator of Marx in the International, played an important role. Frankel, a jeweler by trade, was in the Commune and he motivated the most progressive reforms related to the working class that were instituted. He pushed for the abolition of night work for bakers and for workers cooperatives and trade unions to take over factories not in use. He argued for the Commune to not accept the lowest bidders, which forced wages down, arguing that the Commune should only buy from workers cooperatives. He lost that struggle, although the Commune Council did agree to establish a minimum wage.

There were also about a dozen supporters of Blanqui in the Commune Council. However, on March 17, just before trying to steal the National Guard's cannons, Thiers preemptively arrested Blanqui (who by then was an old man) to prevent the Parisian workers from rallying around him. Blanquists were conspiratorial. Their view was encapsulated by a Blanquist leader in the Commune named Raoul Rigault who said, "Without Blanqui, there is nothing doing, with Blanqui, *everything*." And they spent much of the revolution seeking to get Blanqui back. A venomous and hysterical attack that bourgeois historians continue to level against the Commune to falsely make the workers appear as bloodthirsty villains is their perfectly defensible arrest of some hostages, including the Archbishop of Paris, Georges Darboy, who they hoped to exchange for Blanqui. (Later, as the Versaillese were crushing the Commune, Darboy and dozens of other hostages were shot.) In fact it was *Thiers* who sought to have the archbishop martyred for the counterrevolutionary cause. Darboy himself pleaded with Versailles to make the exchange and wrote, "It is known that

*continued on page 6*

Both historians who defend the Commune and those who despise it have written much about the women who participated at every conjuncture in the Commune. In fact, depictions of women became metaphors for attitudes toward the Commune as a whole. To the bourgeoisie, Parisian women who supported the Commune were crazed viragoes who were "drunk with hate." Depictions of bloodthirsty whores culminate in the bourgeoisie's favorite image of the *pétroleuses*. Supposedly, these were the fanatical Communard women who in the last days, with their innocent children in tow, torched the great buildings of Paris. In reality, the bourgeoisie masks with these fabrications what *really* happened—the bourgeoisie drowned tens of thousands of proletarian men, women and children in a river of blood.

The most well-known female figure, the heroic Louise Michel, embodied the fervent determination of the Commune. Politically she was an anarchist, a follower of Bakunin. She was there on the morning of March 18, rousing Paris upon seeing Thiers' troops in Montmartre. She volunteered to assassinate Thiers at Versailles, where the reactionary bourgeois government resided. She even snuck there and brought back newspapers to prove to her comrades that she could pull it off. She was a nurse with the ambulance companies and a fighter at the Fort of Issy and on the barricades. Defiant at her trial after the crushing of the Commune, she remained politically active for the rest of her life. The French bourgeoisie has since sanitized her image to turn her into a harmless feminist.

However, Michel was not central to the formation of the Women's Union for the Defense of Paris and Aid to the Wounded. The Women's Union was one of the most politically advanced expressions of revolutionary working-class consciousness in the Commune. It was able to lead and organize the widespread popular ferment among women because its precepts reflected the revolutionary proletarian perspective of the Marxist wing of the First International. The Women's Union became the recognized intermediary between women in the city and the Commune government. No other group had such sustained citywide influence, from its founding in April to the end of the Commune on the barricades.

Elisabeth Dmitrieff along with Nathalie Le Mel were the leading forces behind the Women's Union. Twenty years old, the Russian Dmitrieff was sent to Paris by Marx shortly before the Commune arose. She stepped forward to become a main advocate for women and to propagandize for a socialist perspective. Nathalie Le Mel, an active member of the First International and a former militant strike leader in the bookbinders union, worked alongside her.

On 11 April 1871, the *Journal Officiel* of the Commune devoted much of its front page to an appeal by "a group of citizens" to the democratic-minded women of Paris. The appeal called for the women to attend a meeting that evening with the purpose of forming "a women's movement for the defence of Paris." It also expressed the need for "the active collaboration of all the women of Paris who realize...that the present social order bears in itself the seeds of poverty and the death of Freedom and of Justice; who therefore welcome the advent of the reign of Labour and of Equality." The appeal further stated that it was not just the Versailles government that was guilty of betraying Paris, it was equally "the privileged...who have always lived on [the people's] sweat and grown fat on [the people's] misery." The civil war was "the final act of the eternal antagonism between right and might, between work and exploitation, between the people and its executioners!"

At its first meeting, the Women's Union sent a proposal to the Executive Commission of the Commune soliciting material aid to set up facilities in each *arrondissement* (city district) town hall and to subsidize the printing of circulars, posters and notices for distribution. The Executive Commission immediately began to implement the meeting's proposal by printing the entire text of the Address of the Union in the *Journal Officiel* on April 14, with a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting.

The Address illustrates the view of the Women's Union on the source of women's oppression. The designation *ouvrière* (worker) was placed under the name of six of the seven signatories to indicate their working-class origins. It referred to the Commune as a government whose ultimate objective was the abolition of all forms of social inequality, including discrimination against women. Most significantly, it described discrimination against women as a means by which the ruling classes maintain their power:

> "That the Commune, representing the principle of the extinction of all privileges and of all inequality, should therefore consider all legitimate grievances of any section of the population without discrimination of sex, such discrimination having been made and enforced as a means of maintaining the privileges of the ruling classes.
>
> "That success of the present conflict whose aim is...ultimately to regenerate Society by ensuring the rule of Labour and Justice, is of equal significance to the women as it is to the men of Paris."
>
> —quoted in Eugene Schulkind, "Socialist Women During the 1871 Paris Commune," *Past & Present* (February 1985)

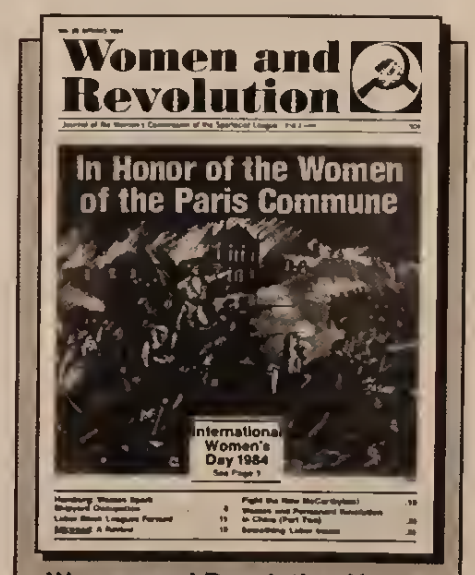
Every member of the Women's Union had to contribute ten centimes and to acknowledge the authority of the Union's Central Committee. The *arrondissement* committees set up by the Women's Union had rotating presidents aided by a board, which was subject to recall by members. The *arrondissement* committees' functions included providing non-religious personnel for welfare institutions, such as orphanages and hostels for the elderly.

The Women's Union also intervened in the political clubs that had taken over churches and had become mass "speak-outs" and organizing centers for Parisian women and men. With women mounting the church pulpits, these gatherings gave voice to widespread hatred of the church. At one meeting a woman suggested that the bodies of 60,000 Parisian priests (her

*continued on page 7*

Bibliothèque Nationale

**"Une Pétroleuse": Portrayal of Communard woman as haggard arsonist. Reactionaries hated the Commune, hated that women played a prominent role.**

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# Paris Commune...

*(continued from page 5)*

Versailles does not want either an exchange or a reconciliation."

Reforms carried out by the Commune included the separation of church and state, expropriation of church properties and free public education. The Commune also effectively implemented a program of "full citizenship rights for immigrants," with the prominent participation of a number of foreigners including the Poles Jaroslaw Dombrowski and Walery Wroblewski, who were some of the Commune's most effective military leaders, and Léo Frankel, who I just mentioned, who was born in Hungary and worked with the German workers movement. Women also played an important role in the Commune. The Women's Union for the Defense of Paris and for Aid to the Wounded was founded by Elisabeth Dmitrieff (see article, page 5). She was sent to Paris by Marx and knew him and his daughters. With Frankel's support her union made clothes for the National Guard in order to engage women and keep them on the side of the revolution. Louise Michel, perhaps the most well-known woman of the Commune, organized a corps of ambulance nurses, tending the wounded even under fire and saving injured Communards from the vicious nuns who ran hospitals in those times.

Marx insisted that a tremendous failing of the Commune was that it did not seize the banks. On March 20, in need of cash, the Central Committee of the National Guard went to the Rothschilds to open a line of credit at their bank. The latter "loaned" the new workers government of Paris a million francs. However, in the Bank of France there were billions of francs, gold bullion, treasury bonds and titles of all kinds. Without the bank, all the capitalists would have been on their knees before the Commune. Lissagaray, one of the key historians of the Commune, who later worked with Marx in London, noted, "Since the 19th March the governors of the bank lived like men condemned to death, every day expecting the execution of the treasure. Of removing it to Versailles they could not dream. It would have required sixty or eighty vans and an army corps." It was the Proudhonists in the Commune who, bowing before the sanctity of private property, would not touch the Bank of France.

That said, as I noted, some of the Commune's politics were in direct counterposition to the formal program of some of its participants. In organizing large-scale industry and manufacture, the Commune was taking steps of *socialization* directly contrary to the Proudhonist program that advocated small property-holding. The Blanquists believed in conspiratorial methods and building a secret organization, yet in actuality their declarations during the Commune called for a free federation of Communes—a large, national organization.

Roger-Viollet

**Communards and National Guardsmen stand over remains of Vendôme Column, symbol of the first Napoléon's military conquests, razed on 16 May 1871.**

Perhaps the most symbolic act of the Commune, which also often meets with the ire of bourgeois historians, was the razing of the Vendôme Column. In a party-like atmosphere, tickets were sold to the public spectacle of toppling this monument to the first Napoléon's military conquests. On May 16 the Commune destroyed it as a symbol of their opposition to bourgeois militarism. The artist Gustave Courbet was the most well-known advocate of its dismantling. Another long-lasting symbol, which has its origins in the Commune, is the song of the international workers movement, the "Internationale," written after the Commune's defeat by the worker-poet Eugène Pottier, who also sat on the Commune Council. As Lenin put it, the Commune was a "festival of the oppressed," and in fact, many Communards were gathered at an outdoor concert under the warm spring sun on May 21 when the Versaillese came sneaking into the city to begin their systematic slaughter.

## Disorganization and Bloody Defeat

The military interventions of the Commune were hampered both because it lacked serious military leadership and because there was an ongoing rivalry with the National Guard, which only gave up partial power to the Commune. There was never a clear centralized command of the armed forces. When the Communards failed to march immediately to Versailles on March 18, Thiers and the forces of counterrevolution began to regroup. Starting in early April 1871, the Versaillese shelled Paris constantly and through a deal with Bismarck, they managed to have him set free 60,000 imprisoned French soldiers, increasing the loyal troops surrounding Paris. After a series of very poorly led sorties against the Versaillese, between early April and early May, a turning point came on May 9 when the Communards lost the Fort of Issy—a key fort between Paris and Versailles. After Issy, the Fort of Vanves fell. Finally on May 22, the gate to the city of Paris at St. Cloud was left undefended and a spy traitor signaled to the Versaillese troops, who began to filter into the city.

In the weeks before that, the army of the Commune had been totally disorganized. There was little effective leadership or discipline and, faced with constant bombardments from Versailles, there was an increased pressure for some kind of strong, centralized, dictatorial leadership. On May 1, elements of the Commune, harkening back to the old French bourgeois revolution under the Jacobins, formed successive "Committees of Public Safety." A split in the Commune occurred between a minority, including some supporters of the International, and a majority. Trotsky noted that the Committee of Public Safety was dictated by the need for "red terror" and described the various measures passed in an attempt to defend the Commune. But he also noted that "the effect of all these measures of intimidation was paralyzed by the helpless opportunism of the guiding elements in the Commune, by their striving to reconcile the bourgeoisie with the *fait accompli* by the help of pitiful phrases, by their vacillations between the fiction of democracy and the reality of dictatorship." Finally, in late May, as the Versaillese captured more and more of the city, the Commune disintegrated entirely. Delescluze, the old, sick Jacobin elected to lead the last Committee of Public Safety, went to fight at a barricade where he was killed.

After the Versaillese entered the city, the Communards fought desperately. But street by street the Commune was crushed. Men, women and children were indiscriminately massacred. Some of the last fighting occurred in the workers' districts on the heights of Belleville and Ménilmontant. The "Wall of the Communards" (*Mur des Fédérés*) in Père Lachaise cemetery was where 200 Communards who fought to the bitter end were put up against the wall and executed. Today, we still march to this place to commemorate our own fallen comrades. Tens of thousands of Communards were massacred by the Versaillese in that last week in May—at least 30,000 people. In one prison so many were executed that blood flowed in its gutters.

Le Monde Illustré

**Communards fight to the bitter end among tombs of Père Lachaise cemetery, night of 27 May 1871.**


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—— Part Two ——

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Many of those who didn't die in the initial massacre suffered fates worse than death. Some were taken to Versailles, jeered at and spit on, kept in the open or in dungeons where they died of hunger and thirst, cholera or gangrene. Some were sent to prison barges and kept tied up in tiny cells. Others, after being tried, were deported to New Caledonia, a desolate colony in the Pacific Ocean to the east of Australia, where, if they survived the voyage where they were kept in cages below deck, they also met grisly fates, from malnutrition to malaria to overwork in prison camps. In a particularly vicious and vindictive act, the artist Courbet was held responsible for the demolition of the Vendôme Column and made to pay hundreds of thousands of francs for its reconstruction. To avoid bankruptcy, he had to paint constantly, but the money received for each painting sold went directly to pay the state. Finally, he fled to Switzerland and died penniless in 1877. In a paean to reaction, on top of one of the hills where the Communards fought, Montmartre, a huge white church was erected and in Paris today you can still see this basilica from miles around, a symbol of the counterrevolutionary French bourgeoisie and religious triumph.

While both the Commune and the Bolshevik Revolution, the "dictatorship of the proletariat," are portrayed lyingly in bourgeois history as vicious and bloodthirsty, the real bloodthirstiness can be seen in the bourgeois ruling class' treatment of the Communards after the Commune's defeat. It also shows how correct the Bolsheviks were and the importance of revolutionary leadership in fighting to *win*.

Illustrated London News, V. Kozlinsky (right)

**Prisoners executed by Versailles troops. The Commune was first expression of dictatorship of the proletariat. 1921 Soviet poster reads: "The Dead of the Paris Commune Have Risen Again Under the Red Flag of the Soviets!"**

After the Commune's defeat, Marx gained a great deal of attention for his book *The Civil War in France* and differences sharpened amongst the different political currents in the First International (especially with Bakunin) over who could claim the most authority and responsibility for the Commune. By 1872, the First International had effectively fallen apart. In a letter to Friedrich Sorge in 1874, Engels wrote that he optimistically hoped that the next international would "be directly Communist and will openly proclaim our principles." But it was not the next international, the Second, which ended up openly waving the banner of communism, it was Lenin's Third International, which was proclaimed in 1919, a result of the victory of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. From the Commune to the Russian Revolution, that is our continuity, the precursor to the banner of the Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

# Revolutionary Women...

*(continued from page 5)*

count) should be used instead of sandbags for constructing barricades.

On April 16, the Commune authorized conversion of abandoned workshops into worker-owned cooperatives. Immediately after the enactment of this decree, all types of labor associations in Paris were invited by the Commission of Labor and Exchange to assist in planning its implementation. The Commune invitation was addressed to unions and associations "of both sexes" and explicitly called on "women citizens, whose devotion to the Social Revolution is so invaluable, not to disregard the all-important question of the organization of production."

Léo Frankel, a Hungarian Marxist and member of the First International, led the Commune's Commission of Labor and Exchange. He was the main link between the Commune leadership and the Women's Union, providing it with money and assistance. The Commission of Labor and Exchange let the Women's Union substitute its own plan for women's cooperatives for the one the Commission had already drafted, prior to the creation of the Union. A committee of nine representatives from labor organizations, including Nathalie Le Mel from the Executive Commission of the Women's Union, met in mid May to coordinate their efforts.

The Women's Union advertised for women to meet and form associations to run workshops in all the traditional women's trades, such as the needle trades, feather processing, artificial flowers and laundry. In a plan submitted to the Commission of Labor and Exchange, the Women's Union elaborated on what it envisioned as the goals of the Commune. It stated that the "Revolution of 18th March represents the point in history at which the proletariat will have...brought to fruition the age-old struggle for social equality," and continued, "to establish firmly the foundations for the new political organization that is its necessary prerequisite, the Commune must complete the partial victory of the People, not by limiting itself to the urgent needs of military defence, but by embarking unequivocally on the path of social reform" (quoted in Schulkind, "Socialist Women During the 1871 Paris Commune"). There is evidence that workshops were formed to produce munitions, sandbags and uniforms.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's reactionary views toward women dominated the French section of the First International. Proudhon had preached the triple inferiority of women for supposed physical, intellectual and moral reasons. He used pseudoscientific claptrap to "prove" that the subordination of women was inevitable. So it is all the more remarkable that the Commune threw off this backward philosophy in favor of the fight for the complete equality of men and women. This is not to say that there still wasn't much backward thinking among the Parisians as a whole. But in spite of the influence of anti-women bigotry, the Commune gave women positions of responsibility, appointed them to administer welfare institutions, sent them on liaison missions to provincial cities and included them on commissions to reform education and open new schools for girls, such as a school for industrial design.

In May, placards appeared calling for peace with Versailles, signed by an anonymous group of women citizens. Two days later, the Women's Union responded with its own posters, denouncing the "anonymous group of reactionary women" who had written such a "shocking proclamation." It wrote in the name of "social revolution, the right to work, and equality and justice" and excoriated these women for calling for conciliation with the "cowardly assassins" of Versailles. The wall posters also affirmed the view of the Women's Union that the civil war was a class conflict.

A final tragic note is that on the day before the Versailles troops entered the city to crush the Commune, the Women's Union was launching the Federal Chamber of Working Women to reorganize women's work based on federated laborers' associations. Instead, the Women's Union organized women for the barricades, where many soon faced their final hour.

A few months after the massacre of the Commune, Léo Frankel wrote in a republican newspaper a passionate denunciation of those who opposed women's equality:

> "Women are deprived of their rights by the claim that their mental and physical faculties are inferior to those of men because nature designed women to be mother, wife and housekeeper. Thus, in all our laws and in all our institutions, women are considered as inferior to men, as being servants of men.
>
> "All the objections produced against equality of men and women are of the same sort as those which are produced against the emancipation of the Negro race.... Firstly people are blindfolded and then they are told that they have been blind since birth."
>
> —quoted in Schulkind, "Socialist Women During the 1871 Paris Commune"

In a letter to Dr. Ludwig Kugelmann dated 17 April 1871, Marx argued against the defeatist position that one should only take up arms when victory is certain. He strongly made the point that political leadership is key. The Marxists Léo Frankel and Elisabeth Dmitrieff intervened into the short-lived Commune with a revolutionary proletarian program. Conscious of their goal of an egalitarian classless society, they helped lay the basis for future working-class struggles. Marx wrote:

> "World history would indeed be very easy to make if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances. It would, on the other hand, be of a very mystical nature, if 'accidents' played no part. These accidents themselves fall naturally into tbe general course of development and are compensated again by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very dependent on such 'accidents,' which included the 'accident' of the character of those who at first stand at the head of the movement....
>
> "Whatever the immediate results [of the Commune] may be, a new point of departure of world-historic importance has been gained." ■

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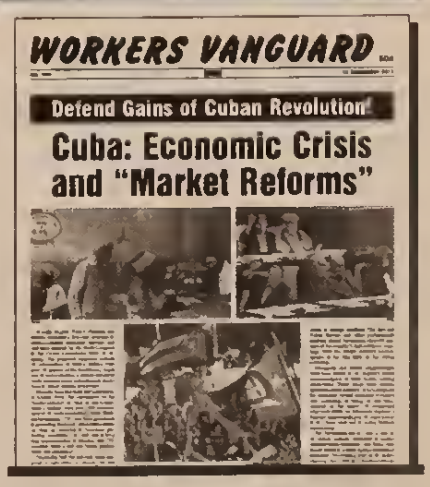


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# Fake Trotskyists in Camp of Counterrevolution

# Hue and Cry over China's Role in Africa

In August 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Angola to witness a major agreement between the government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the American oil giant Chevron. Clinton took the occasion to pledge further U.S. investment, which came on top of an earlier promise by Washington to help build two hydroelectric plants. For Angola's bourgeois-nationalist MPLA, these deals marked something of a turn by the U.S. imperialists. For nearly 30 years after winning independence from Portugal in 1975, Angola was wracked by a devastating civil war. For much of that period, the U.S. gave military and financial support to guerrilla forces allied with apartheid South Africa fighting a reactionary war to unseat the MPLA, which was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba. Furthermore, U.S. capitalists had shown little interest in investing in Angola following the official end of the civil war in 2002.

There was a clear purpose to the friendly face Clinton offered the MPLA government. The year before her visit, Angola had become Africa's largest trade partner with China, the most powerful of those countries today where capitalist rule has been overthrown. Providing nearly 15 percent of China's petroleum, Angola has surpassed Saudi Arabia as the largest oil exporter to China. In return, Beijing has provided low-interest loans that have been used to build hospitals, schools, irrigation systems and roads. Similar deals have been struck from Sudan and Algeria to Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, providing oil and metallic minerals for mainland China's booming industries.

For the U.S. and other imperialist powers, which suffered a historic defeat with the 1949 Chinese Revolution, these are not welcome developments. Carried out by a peasant-guerrilla army led by Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the 1949 Revolution established a workers state, although one that was bureaucratically deformed from its inception. The creation in subsequent years of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for enormous social progress for workers, peasants, women and national minorities. Ever since 1949, the imperialists have sought the counterrevolutionary overturn of CCP rule and the return of China to untrammeled capitalist exploitation. To this end they have pursued military pressure and threats, supported internal anti-Communist movements and "dissidents" and, over the last 30-plus years, penetrated the Chinese mainland economy courtesy of the CCP regime's "market reforms."

As Chinese trade and aid agreements with African countries began to proliferate five years ago, imperialist spokesmen sounded the alarm. World Bank head Paul Wolfowitz lashed out at the very favorable loans offered by China's state-owned banks, which, he declaimed, did not meet "social and environmental standards." This from a man who a few years earlier had been a leading architect of the Bush administration's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq! Chiming in with a throwback to the anti-Soviet Cold War, a headline in Britain's *Daily Mail* (18 July 2008) screamed: "How China's Taking Over Africa, and Why the West Should Be VERY Worried."

The blowback touched off a debate among academics and government officials in China on its role in Africa, within the bounds, to be sure, of overall policy set by the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy. An article titled "The Practice of China's Diplomatic Concept of 'Harmonious World'—An Analysis of Sino-African Relations in Recent Years" by Ge Zhiguo rightly condemned "the West's longstanding policies toward Africa," which have not only "not given Africa prosperity and stability" but have also "caused many African countries to sink into long-term chaos and ethnic violence" (*Gaoxiao Sheke Dongtai* [Social Sciences Perspectives in Higher Education], third issue in 2007; this and other translations are by *WV*).

Xinhua

**Above: Work crew at one of 30 geothermal wells drilled in Kenya by a Chinese state-owned oil company, September 13. Below: Chinese-built Merowe Dam provides Sudan with stable electrical power supply.**

EPA

From King Leopold's killing fields of the Belgian Congo to Britain's concentration camps in Kenya and U.S. support to apartheid South Africa, the record of the Western imperialists in Africa is one of mass murder, slave-like labor and brutal repression of independence movements and workers struggles. Indeed, the precursor to such barbarism was the enslavement of Africans in capitalism's early mercantile stage. Imperialist subjugation, far from modernizing such societies, has reinforced their backwardness and immiseration. Noting that China's investments in Africa are motivated by very different purposes, Ge Zhiguo called on Beijing to reform some of its own policies to counter resentment among Africans over the treatment of workers in China's enterprises and the undercutting of local businesses by Chinese entrepreneurs.

As Trotskyists, the International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We support China's right to trade in order to procure what it needs to further its development. We recognize, however, that China's investment and aid programs are determined not by proletarian internationalism but by the CCP bureaucracy's narrow nationalist interests, which are rooted in the Stalinist dogma of "building socialism in one country" and its corollary, "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism (now called the "harmonious world" policy). Opposed to the perspective of international proletarian revolution, the CCP regime has accommodated imperialism—including, as will be discussed below, by joining with the U.S. and South Africa in backing the anti-Soviet forces in Angola—while militarily and politically supporting "friendly" bourgeois rulers in Africa and elsewhere who brutally repress workers and the rural and urban poor.

China's role in Africa is ***contradictory***, reflecting the contradictions besetting China itself as a bureaucratically ruled workers state in an imperialist-dominated world. To defend and extend the gains of the Chinese Revolution requires a proletarian political revolution to oust the CCP bureaucracy and replace it with a regime of workers democracy committed to the fight for world socialism.

## China Is Not Capitalist

Forming the left flank of the imperialists' anti-China campaign are such "socialists" as the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), led by Peter Taaffe, and the United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel. A 30 March 2008 article titled "China in Africa" by the CWI's German section, Socialist Alternative (SAV), denounced China as "just another player" in the "game" of exploiting African countries. The SAV declared that "China, like other imperialist countries, only seeks to exploit their resources and markets as effectively as possible." In the USec's *International Viewpoint* online (January 2007), Jean Nanga, described as a "Congolese revolutionary Marxist," similarly condemned China's supposed "global ambition" as "motivated by capitalist interest."

That the CWI and USec have shamelessly enrolled in the anti-Communist crusade against China is no surprise. Prostituting themselves to bourgeois "democracy," the USec and the CWI's predecessor hailed all manner of imperialist-backed counterrevolutionaries that were arrayed against the former Soviet and East European deformed workers states, e.g., Polish Solidarność and the reactionary rabble on Boris Yeltsin's Moscow barricades in August 1991.

Directing its Stalinophobia against China, the USec has championed such pro-imperialist "dissidents" as Nobel "Peace" Prize recipient Liu Xiaobo, a fan of the U.S. wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan (see "Hong Kong: Fake Trotskyists Hail Imperialist Running Dog Liu Xiaobo," *WV* No. 981, 27 May). Meanwhile, the CWI, as our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain noted, has cheered anti-Communist riots in Tibet and openly defended "democratic" capitalist Taiwan, which has long been supported by U.S. and Japanese imperialism as a dagger aimed at the People's Republic of China (see "China Is Not Capitalist," *Workers Hammer* No. 202, Spring 2008). Peter Taaffe likes to pontificate that the "transition" toward full-blown capitalism "has not yet been fully completed" ("Halfway House," *Socialism Today*, July/August 2011). This is just a bit of cosmetic cover for the CWI's concrete and consistent support to the forces of capitalist counterrevolution.

The furor over China's role in Africa began to seriously mount in 2006 in response to the Darfur conflict in western Sudan, which resulted in mass slaughter and the driving of some two million people from their homes. The proximate cause of that conflict was the unleashing

of *janjaweed* militias, based on nomadic Muslims, by the Khartoum government against guerrilla forces based on a farming population that was also Muslim. In the U.S., a campaign by Christian rightists, Zionists and a number of prominent liberals demanding imperialist intervention to "save Darfur" demonized China, which has invested heavily in Sudanese oil production and developed close ties with the al-Bashir regime, providing it with military hardware. Joining in with this cabal, the SAV's 2008 article wailed, "The Chinese regime, which imports 8 percent of its oil from Sudan, has shown during the recent conflict that it cares a lot about its profits and far less about the fate of the local population."

It should be noted that one of the factors prompting China to increasingly turn to Africa for petroleum was a rabidly anti-Communist campaign, led largely by the American labor bureaucracy, that succeeded in quashing the China National Offshore Oil Company's planned acquisition of U.S.-based Unocal in 2005. Earlier that year, the CWI's U.S. affiliate, also called Socialist Alternative, enlisted in the anti-China effort by cosigning a leaflet demanding that Harvard University divest from PetroChina, another Chinese state-owned enterprise, and Unocal.

Anti-China tirades by liberals and ostensible socialists might play well in London, Paris and other imperialist centers, where the bulk of the left pushes the lie that China is capitalist or is irreversibly on that road. But that message is not so eagerly embraced in Africa, where Chinese aid in building hospitals, schools and other infrastructure contrasts sharply with the legacy left by the real imperialists: extreme poverty, social backwardness, tribal and ethnic warfare. The carving up of Africa by the European powers at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference was a signal of the emergence of modern imperialism. As V.I. Lenin explained in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), the advanced industrial countries were increasingly compelled to export capital to the more backward countries in the search for raw materials and cheap labor. The resulting interimperialist competition led to two world wars and countless colonial adventures, at the cost of untold death and destruction.

The fundamentally different purpose of China's investments in Africa can be seen in the value of the commodities they generate. All commodities—from mined products to factory-produced goods—embody both use value (as desirable objects of consumption) and exchange value (broadly reflected in market prices). Under capitalism, the owners of industrial plants and other means of production amass profit by hiring labor to produce commodities, with the purpose of increasing exchange value. China's overseas investments, which are financed by several of the mainland's state banks, are driven not by the profit motive but by the need for raw materials for its collectivized industries at home—i.e., to extract use value.

U.S. State Department official Princeton Lyman, who is decidedly not a Marxist, acknowledged as much in a 2005 presentation to the Congressional U.S.-China Commission, stating:

> "China utilizes a variety of instruments to advance its interest in ways that western nations can only envy. Most of China's investments are through state-owned companies, whose individual investments do not have to be profitable if they serve overall Chinese objectives. Thus the representative of China's state-owned construction company in Ethiopia could reveal that he was instructed by Beijing to bid low on various tenders, without regard for profit. China's long term objective in Ethiopia is in access to future natural resource investments, not in construction business profits."

The mere fact that China engages in world trade does not make it capitalist or imperialist. It is because Chinese investment is ***not*** driven by the capitalist profit motive that its effects are so radically different from those produced by imperialist exploitation of Third World countries. Martyn Davies, director of the China Africa Network at South Africa's University of Pretoria, lauds the Chinese as "the biggest builders of infrastructure" in Africa ("The Next Empire?" *Atlantic*, May 2010), a sentiment echoed by American academic Deborah Brautigam in her overwhelmingly favorable 2009 book on China's role in Africa, *The Dragon's Gift* (Oxford University Press).

## Pressures of the World Market

China's need to import raw materials became acute around a decade ago when, due to its soaring economic growth, the mainland could no longer provide the bulk of oil and metallic minerals to meet industrial needs. By virtue of its "going global" policy, China by 2009 was importing 52 percent of its oil and 69 percent of its iron ore.

Mariner Books

Bettmann

**Above: Chained Congolese men, victims of Belgian King Leopold II's murderous colonial plunder. Below: British colonial forces terrorize Kenyan villagers in 1953 in suppression of Mau Mau rebellion.**

China's situation contrasts with that of the Soviet workers state, which issued out of the 1917 October Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party. After the failure of proletarian revolutions in more advanced European countries, especially Germany, a conservative bureaucratic caste led by J.V. Stalin usurped political power beginning in 1923-24. Severely marked by the backwardness inherited from tsarism and the devastating effects of imperialist war and civil war, the Soviet Union possessed abundant iron ore, oil, timber and other raw materials. Stalin & Co. used that fact as an argument for the reactionary-utopian notion that socialism could be achieved in Soviet Russia alone. This threw overboard the basic Marxist understanding that achieving socialism—a society of material abundance—requires workers rule internationally, particularly in the industrially developed countries.

Based on its planned economy, the Soviet Union underwent phenomenal growth in the 1930s while the rest of the world was mired in the Great Depression. But through its own resources and efforts, the USSR could not reach, much less surpass, the technological level and labor productivity of the advanced capitalist countries. Decades of imperialist military and economic pressure, combined with bureaucratic mismanagement and Stalinist sellouts of revolutionary opportunities internationally, fatally weakened the Soviet workers state, which was destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92.

Following this catastrophe, the CCP leadership conducted an internal study aimed at figuring out how to avoid a similar fate while hewing to its nationalist Stalinist program of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." One of the regime's conclusions was that the Soviet Union had spent too much of its resources trying to compete with the imperialists militarily and in other ways. China, it was determined, would instead expand and deepen its ties to the world capitalist market. Beijing is now such a "responsible" partner in the world market that the Chief Economist at the World Bank, one of the main institutions enforcing imperialist dictates, is Justin Yifu Lin, one of China's leading economists!

In "going global," Beijing has increasingly backed military intervention in the Third World by the United Nations, a den of imperialist thieves and their victims. This represents a turn from the policy the CCP regime adopted when China was admitted to the UN 40 years ago. As Stefan Stähle noted in "China's Shifting Attitude Towards United Nations Peacekeeping Operations" in the academic journal *China Quarterly* (September 2008):

> "At first, China completely rejected the idea of UN peacekeeping. Beijing regarded all UN interventions as being manipulated by the superpowers, not least because China had been the target of the first US-led enforcement action authorized by the United Nations in 1951 [*sic*, should be 1950] during the Korean War.... Since 1981, however, when China began to open up to the world, Chinese diplomats have voted in favour of all those missions which carried out traditional peacekeeping tasks or managed transitions."

In plain English, "peacekeeping tasks" translate to bloody repression and the imposition of imperialist diktat. China has criminally lent its own military and police forces to such "peacekeeping," from Haiti to Sudan. As Chris Alden noted in *China in Africa* (Zed Books, 2007), "The majority of Chinese peacekeepers, in fact, are based in Africa, making China the largest contributor of all the permanent member states of the UN Security Council to peacekeeping operations." As proletarian internationalists, we demand that China end its participation in UN military missions.

As China's economy continues to grow while the imperialist countries are mired in a seemingly endless depression—the latest demonstration of the crisis-ridden nature of the system of production for profit—it might seem that Beijing has indeed found a way around the pressures that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. But such an idea is based on fallacious belief in the stability of the world capitalist order and the benevolence of China's imperialist trading partners, which dominate the world market.

In China itself, the country's stunning economic growth serves to ***exacerbate*** class and social tensions. Particularly due to "market reforms," an enormous divide has been created between corrupt government officials, capitalist entrepreneurs and privileged petty-bourgeois on one side and the hundreds of millions of proletarians—in both state-owned and private enterprises—and poor peasants on the other. A wave of strikes last year in auto plants and other private enterprises was but one component in the explosion of what the CCP regime calls "mass incidents"—work stoppages, assemblies of petitioners, protests against corruption, etc. The number of such incidents reached 180,000 in 2010, doubling since 2006.

Sooner or later, the Stalinist regime will bring China to the brink, posing the threat of capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, the antagonism between the bureaucracy and China's toiling masses is preparing the ground for a proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist regime. The Chinese proletariat needs the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist party that combats the apostles of "democratic" counterrevolution, not least those who parade this program in "socialist" and even "Trotskyist" garb, and breaks the working class from Stalinist nationalism. Guided by such a leadership, a China of workers and peasants councils would promote proletarian revolution internationally. Under workers rule, the industrial and technological capacity in Japan, the U.S. and West Europe would be harnessed for the all-around development of China as part of a world socialist order.

## "Non-Interference": Support to Bourgeois Rule

In responding to the charge of Chinese "neocolonialism" in Africa, many academics and government spokesmen in China point to Beijing's policy of "non-interference" in other countries' internal affairs. Writing in an academic journal, Liu Naiya enthused over China's aid to former colonial countries in Africa as "a 'gift' to African nationalism from a socialist country. In other words, it is a rational political investment—a great demonstration of the brotherly friendship of international communism" ("Mutual Benefit: The Essence of Sino-African Relations—A Response to the Charge of 'China's Neocolonialism in Africa'," *Xiya Feizhou* [West Asia and Africa], August 2006).

CCP spokesmen like to point to the aid and diplomatic support that China early on gave to some of the movements in Africa that fought for independence from colonial rule. And there is no doubt that Chinese aid and investment have spurred development in many African countries. But this is a far cry from socialist internationalism. China's business agreements come with the "political condition" that Beijing do nothing to upset its bourgeois trading partners. Thus the Chinese Stalinists help ***prop up*** the capitalist order that keeps the masses of African workers and peasants in abject poverty. The CCP's willingness to shore up reactionary bourgeois regimes was demonstrated as early as the 1954 Asian-African Solidarity Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, where Zhou Enlai propounded the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence," including a pledge to refrain from pressuring other countries to change their economic systems. The "anti-imperialist" rationale for this class-collaborationist program was exposed as threadbare by the Mao regime's simultaneous policy of peaceful coexistence with Japan, the imperialist powerhouse of Asia.

*continued on page 10*

# China...

*(continued from page 9)*

A common reference in arguments supporting Beijing's policies is the building of the Tanzania-Zambia railway by Mao's China in the early-mid 1970s. This was a significant development that entailed an enormous outlay of self-sacrificing labor by Chinese workers. But the CCP simultaneously gave political support to Tanzania's Nyerere regime, which repressed basic trade-union struggles by impoverished workers.

In this, the Chinese Stalinists showed their political kinship with the Kremlin bureaucracy. Soviet aid was critical in the construction of the Aswan Dam in Egypt, which was completed in 1970. Along with this aid came Soviet military advisers, and more. In fact, Moscow gave Egypt's bourgeois bonapartist Nasser regime more advanced military hardware than it gave to North Vietnam in its heroic fight against U.S. imperialism! Meanwhile, the Soviet-aligned Sudanese Communist Party subordinated itself to the bourgeois-nationalist strongman Nimeiry, betraying a revolutionary opportunity that ended in a massacre of Communists in the early 1970s. Following the same class-collaborationist program, the South African Communist Party (SACP) has for over 80 years submerged itself in an alliance with the African National Congress (ANC), today helping to enforce the dictates of neo-apartheid capitalism as part of the ANC-led bourgeois government.

Revolutionary Marxists recognize that a ***workers state*** might be compelled to strike trade deals and diplomatic agreements with capitalist states. But this must not be confused with the task of the ***communist party*** to lead the struggle for proletarian revolution. In Lenin's time, the Soviet workers state signed the 1922 Rapallo treaty with capitalist Germany, an agreement that included military cooperation. Simultaneously, the Bolsheviks were the leading force in the Communist International, seeking to forge Communist parties that could successfully lead the workers, not least in Germany, to the proletarian seizure of power.

A revolutionary regime would also seek to use overseas assets as a weapon of proletarian-internationalist strategy. Leon Trotsky addressed this in regard to the Chinese Eastern Railroad, which had been built by tsarist Russia to further the plunder of China but remained under Soviet ownership following the October Revolution. In 1929, two years after slaughtering tens of thousands of Chinese Communists and other militants, Chiang Kai-shek's regime provoked a military conflict with the Soviet Union, then under the Stalinist bureaucracy, over control of the railroad. In "Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition" (September 1929), Trotsky fought against those who treated Soviet policy in this regard as "imperialist." He pointed out: "We regard the Chinese Eastern Railroad as one of the weapons of the world revolution, more specifically, of the Russian and Chinese revolutions.... So long as we have the possibility and the power, we shall protect it from imperialism, in preparation for handing it over to the victorious Chinese revolution."

Magnum

Bohemia

**Right: Mao welcomes Nixon to Beijing in 1972 as China seals anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. Bottom: Chinese advisers with Angolan FNLA leader Holden Roberto (second from left), who joined with UNITA in 1975 in CIA-funded war against Soviet-backed MPLA.**

Trotsky continued that "the character of this type of socialist enterprise" and its administration and working conditions "would have to be such as to raise the economy and culture of the backward countries with the aid of the capital, technology, and experience of the richer proletarian states to the mutual benefit of both sides." Projecting how a proletarian dictatorship in Britain would handle the former imperialist rulers' concessions in India, he wrote:

> "The workers' state will be bound to transform them not only into vehicles of India's economic upbuilding but also of her future socialist reconstruction. Naturally, this policy, equally indispensable for consolidating socialist England, could be carried through only shoulder to shoulder with the vanguard of the Indian proletariat and it would have to offer obvious advantages to the Indian peasants."

## CCP's Anti-Soviet Treachery

The perspective outlined by Trotsky is diametrically opposed to the nationalist, ***anti-revolutionary*** program of the Chinese Stalinists. This was glaringly seen in the criminal alliance Mao's regime forged with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, castigated and slandered by Maoists as "social-imperialist" and the "main enemy" of the world's peoples.

One of the fruits of this betrayal was the devastation of Angola from decades of war. After winning independence from Portugal in 1975, the country was thrown into a civil war between three nationalist guerrilla forces: the MPLA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). Initially, as Marxists we gave no support to any of the contending sides, all of which were petty-bourgeois nationalist movements aspiring to congeal a bourgeois regime. However, that situation soon changed.

Aided by the Soviet Union, the MPLA gained control of most key areas, including the capital Luanda, and declared Angola a "people's republic." In response, the U.S. forced the unification of UNITA and the FNLA and supplied them with arms, while South Africa and Portugal added hundreds of their own troops to the effort to overthrow the MPLA. The civil war was thus transformed into a proxy war between U.S. imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state. Marxists had a clear side in this conflict: for the military victory of the MPLA. Mao's China, however, actively ***supported the CIA-funded FNLA/UNITA***, even sending military instructors to train the anti-Communist cutthroats. Testifying to China's role, U.S. officials noted that Washington was able to cut back "aid to the anti-communist movements, because we were satisfied to let the Chinese do the work in the field" (quoted in *Le Monde*, 5 December 1975). So much for "non-interference"!

As South African troops led a blitzkrieg toward Luanda, China's official *Peking Review* (21 November 1975) issued a high-level policy statement condemning the "expansion and crude interference of the Soviet Union," refusing to even mention the invasion by the apartheid armed forces! Soviet aid, combined with later intervention by heroic Cuban troops, eventually turned the tide and drove back the imperialist proxies and their South African advance guard. But the civil war dragged on. Bridges were destroyed by bombs, rural roads and fields were planted with land mines, and urban infrastructure all but collapsed, enormously compounding the country's pre-existing deep backwardness.

The Angolan masses paid in blood for the treachery of the Chinese Stalinists, who have been able subsequently to take advantage of the destitution of Angola and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa to which they themselves contributed. More fundamentally, with its material aid to reactionary, imperialist-backed anti-Soviet forces from Southern Africa to Afghanistan in the 1970s-80s, the CCP contributed to the destruction of the USSR itself, a catastrophic defeat for workers and the oppressed the world over, including in China.

## For Proletarian Internationalism!

Directed by the Beijing bureaucracy's narrow national interests, overseas state investment often pits Chinese firms and managers against the workers they employ. Along with the Chinese-financed mines, oil facilities and construction projects that have sprung up throughout Africa has come evidence of workers abused through discriminatory hiring practices, low wages and outright union-busting. One study cited by Deborah Brautigam in *The Dragon's Gift* found that Chinese construction firms in Namibia violated minimum wage laws and "affirmative action" training requirements while also failing to pay social security and other benefits. Chinese workers in Africa have waged their own battles against mistreatment. According to Brautigam, when some 200 Chinese construction workers in Equatorial Guinea went on strike in March 2008, a clash with local security forces resulted in two workers being killed.

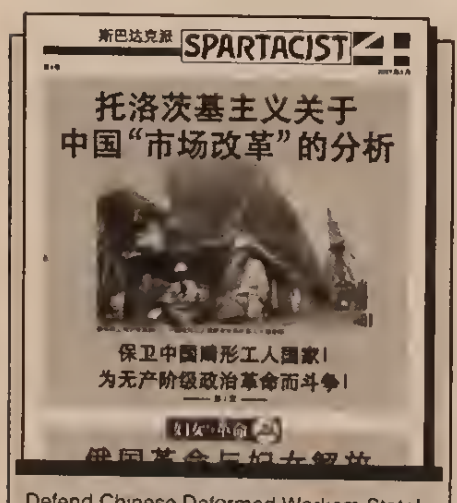
A fact virtually ignored by both the bourgeois and the "left" press is that many of the worst attacks on African workers are carried out by private Chinese entrepreneurs who, with Beijing's approval, have attached themselves like leeches to China's investment program. In 2010, two Chinese supervisors at the Collum Coal Mine in Zambia shot 13 miners during a wage protest. The following year, Zambian authorities decided not to press charges, touching off widespread anger among Zambians. The mine, which the press described as "Chinese-owned," was not a state-owned entity but the property of a private investor, operated by his four younger brothers.

Marxists support workers fighting for union rights and decent wages and benefits, including their struggles against Chinese management. At the same time, it is necessary to combat nationalist demagogues and trade-union misleaders who seize on the abuses of workers to jump onto the imperialists' anti-China bandwagon. For example, the COSATU union federation in South Africa, part of the Tripartite Alliance with the ANC and SACP, has long vituperated against Chinese clothing imports driving out local manufacturers.

Such protectionism promotes the lie that the (overwhelmingly black) South African proletariat has a common "national interest" with the (overwhelmingly white) South African capitalist class, revealing the bankruptcy of the COSATU bureaucrats' claims to stand for international working-class solidarity. It also feeds the drive for counterrevolution in China, strengthening the hand of the imperialists whose military and economic might pose formidable obstacles to proletarian revolution in South Africa and elsewhere. Defense of China and the other deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos—is of vital importance in the fight for a socialist future in Africa, for which the combative and strategically concentrated South African working class holds the key. You can't win new gains if you can't defend old ones!

Marxists must also combat the chauvinism that permeates the Chinese state bureaucracy and its representatives overseas. With budgets and deadlines determined by Beijing, Chinese companies often employ workers from China rather than hire locally. Defending such practices, the general manager of the state-owned China National Overseas Engineering Corporation declared: "Chinese people can stand very hard work. This is a cultural difference. Chinese people work until they finish and then rest." Zambian workers, he complained, were "like the British": "They have tea breaks and a lot of days off. For our construction company that means it costs a lot more" (quoted in Chris Alden, *China in Africa*). Such comments speak volumes about the contempt that Chinese bureaucrats hold toward both African and Chinese workers.

Inheriting the overseas operations of Chinese state enterprises, a government of workers and peasants councils in China would make special efforts to hire and train local workers, with union rights and with pay and benefits above local scale. Such a regime would also make short shrift of the bourgeois elements who have arisen in China as a result of "market reforms" and have found a place in Africa as well. Above all, it would follow the lead of the early Soviet workers state in promoting the victory of workers rule throughout the planet. It is to carry out the task of forging the Leninist vanguard parties necessary to lead that struggle that the ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■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# ILWU...

*(continued from page 12)*

the "local community" and a "foreign corporation." But the Longview "community" includes the cops who are busting unionists' heads, and the U.S. components of the EGT conglomerate are no less committed than their foreign partners to keeping the port union-free. The ILWU has the potential to win this struggle precisely because it is *not* local but coastwide. As the shipping industry's *Journal of Commerce* (19 September) acknowledged: "It is this unchallenged jurisdiction at West Coast ports that makes the ILWU one of the most powerful unions in the United States. In the container sector, shipping executives know a dispute at one port can lead to the ILWU shutting down their operations on the entire coast." If the union is going to stand down EGT, it has to be prepared to continue playing to its strengths: its collective organization and its ability to stop the flow of goods.

International working-class solidarity could be decisive, especially if scab grain starts being shipped out. The *Journal of Commerce* observed: "The bigger concern for EGT, however, could be the close connections the ILWU maintains with dockworker unions in Asia, where most of its grain will be exported. The ILWU and its Asian counterparts in the past have coordinated job actions on both sides of the Pacific against vessels involved in labor disputes at U.S. and Asian ports." The ILWU augmented its power, as did the 250-member Panama Canal pilots union, when the pilots affiliated with the ILWU on September 17. But when ILWU leaders rail against EGT as a "foreign" threat to U.S. shippers, they line up behind the profitability of ILWU members' red-white-and-blue exploiters and undermine international labor solidarity.

Brock Lite

**September 7: Unionists who mobilized to stop grain shipment face off against cops. ILWU is in crucial fight for its future.**

The ILWU Ladies Auxiliary has played a prominent role in protesting EGT's union-busting. Alliances with working-class women and the unemployed played an important role historically in union organizing and strike battles. The ILWU's multiracial membership—majority black in the Bay Area and Latino in L.A.—gives the uniun the potential to forge strong bonds with the ghetto and barrio masses. But to galvanize such support behind the unions requires a labor movement that links its struggles to the fight for black freedom and immigrant rights and defends all those thrown onto capitalism's scrap heap.

The backstabbing role of the Trumka AFL-CIO leadership epitomizes the policies of the U.S. labor bureaucracy, which is wedded to the continued rule of capital and preaches reliance on the bosses' state and political parties, especially the Democrats. Labor needs a leadership based on a class-struggle program and committed to the ***independence*** of the working class from the class enemy. Such a leadership would support the building of a workers party to lead all the exploited and oppressed in the fight for a workers government, destroying the capitalists' repressive state machinery root and branch. ■

# Libya...

*(continued from page 3)*

was flown to Tripoli where he was interrogated, including by British forces, and tortured. Now that Belhaj is in cahoots with the imperialists, he has made assurances that the fact he was imprisoned and tortured in the past "will not stop the new Libya having orderly relations with the United States and Britain" (guardian.co.uk, 4 September).

### Workers Power: Once More unto the Breach...

Among the most avid supporters of the "rebels" on the Labourite left, Workers Power admits that "a major part of the rebel leadership was willing to hand over larger parts of the economy to imperialist multinationals," while sections "with Islamic roots plan to include elements of Sharia into the legal system." But never mind that: "It would be ridiculous to give up on the Libyan revolution because of the crimes of its leadership or the manoeuvres of the imperialists in Washington, London or Paris." For Workers Power, the imperialist-backed "rebels" provide an opening for "a struggle for consistent democracy and internationalism" ("Should Socialists Support the Libyan Revolution?" 22 August).

Workers Power's blatant pro-imperialism seemingly caused some dissent within its membership and led to the expulsion of Chris Newcombe. In a public statement dated 28 August he declared that he is forming a faction in opposition to the Workers Power leadership. Opposing support to the "rebels," Newcombe asks:

> "Given that the rebel TNC has totally aligned itself with the imperialist aggressors, what possible basis is there for revolutionaries among the rebel forces to strike even a military front with its leadership and forces loyal to it? Should they not, rather, immediately turn their guns on these pro-imperialist traitors?"

Newcombe adds that anyone reading articles on Libya by Workers Power's League for a Fifth International (L5I) may "ask themselves whether the League has in fact reversed the polarity of its programme, rejecting the AIUF [anti-imperialist united front] in favor of a pro-imperialist united front" (WP-L5I Left Opposition internet posting, 28 August).

Workers Power has a record of marching in lockstep with imperialism. In 1995, under the guise of providing humanitarian aid for workers in Bosnia, Workers Power refused to defend the Bosnian Serbs against imperialist bombing. Four years later, during the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia, led by then Labour prime minister Tony Blair and Democratic U.S. president Bill Clinton, this arch-Labourite organisation joined in the imperialists' war cry over "poor little Kosovo," supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army which was a stalking horse for the imperialist attack on Serbia. Despite a veneer of opposition to the bombing, Workers Power marched alongside the Alliance for Workers Liberty in a 10 April 1999 rally in London dominated by NATO and Albanian flags and placards screaming, "NATO Good Luck" and "NATO Now or Never."

Capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, an enormous defeat for the working masses of the entire world, emboldened the imperialists to aggressively assert their might over weaker countries through an increasing number of bombings, wars and occupations, exemplified by the slaughter of Afghans and Iraqis in which U.S. and British imperialism have taken a leading role. The social-democratic "left" helped pave the way for these atrocities by hailing the counterrevolutionary forces, from Polish Solidarność to Boris Yeltsin's Russian "democrats."

In Third World countries, the pseudo-Trotskyists invoke the "anti-imperialist united front" as a cover for supporting bourgeois regimes. This includes support to the reactionary "Islamic Revolution" of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1979. In the Arab world, both Stalinists and pseudo-Trotskyists hailed the so-called "Arab Revolution" represented in the 1950s by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and in the 1970s by Qaddafi in Libya. Support to Arab nationalism has led to the bloody defeat of workers movements throughout the Near East, not least in Egypt, where Nasser rewarded the Communists for their support by imprisoning, torturing and killing them.

The bourgeois-nationalist regimes of Nasser and Qaddafi inevitably failed to address the felt needs of the masses. To the "anti-imperialist united front," we counterpose the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, which holds that in the neocolonial countries, the proletariat must lead all the oppressed masses in a struggle for socialist revolution against their "own" bourgeoisie, as part of an internationalist strategy for proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries.

We have always politically opposed Qaddafi's capitalist regime, a dictatorship that has brutally suppressed anyone suspected of opposing his rule. At the same time, we have consistently defended Lihya against imperialist attacks. During the 1986 U.S. bombing of Tripoli under U.S. president Ronald Reagan our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. sent a team to Tripoli to express our solidarity with the neocolonial victims of imperialism. The same year we wrote:

> "For the 'crime' of defying American imperialism and for being a military client of the Soviet Union, Libya's Qaddafi was chosen by Reagan early on to take the rap for all the world's terrorist incidents. For over five years the U.S. has conducted a vendetta against this small desert country with a population of under 4 million."
>
> —*Workers Vanguard*, No. 411, 12 September 1986

In fact, when Qaddafi first came to power in 1969, he was fanatically anti-Communist and anti-Soviet. But with U.S. imperialism targeting Libya—and him personally for destruction—he became increasingly reliant on Soviet arms to defend his country. The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 removed what had been the main impediment to imperialist depredations around the world. Following the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, Qaddafi renounced Libya's nuclear weapons programme and welcomed imperialist inspectors to verify this. In 2004, then Labour prime minister Tony Blair brokered a rapprochement with Qaddafi and over the last decade his regime closely collaborated with Washington and London in the "war on terror," while policing the Mediterranean to help the imperialists to keep African immigrants out of Europe.

### Myth of the "Arab Revolution"

On Qaddafi's downfall, the SWP hoped that his removal might yet invigorate the "Arab Revolution" and warned: "Don't let west hijack Arab Spring" (*Socialist Worker*, 27 August). An "Arab revolution" by definition cannot be a class revolution of the workers in the Arab countries against their bourgeois rulers. It flies in the face of the need for the political independence of the proletariat from all bourgeois forces and is an obstacle to the working class developing basic class consciousness.

A fundamental difference between the events in Libya and the popular upsurges in Tunisia and Egypt is that in the latter two countries there is a powerful, concentrated working class. The proletariat is the only force that has the potential social power and class interest to lead all of the impoverished and oppressed in socialist revolution to overthrow all the murderous regimes of the region. But to achieve this task, the working class must emerge as a revolutionary force under its own class banner. The task of genuine Marxists is to combat illusions in an "Arab Revolution" (Mark II) and all manifestations of nationalism, which in Egypt leads to the masses placing their trust in the army. It is also vital to dispel illusions in "democratic" imperialism, which will be used by the capitalist rulers to derail struggles against dictatorship. The NATO bombing of Libya, as well as the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, is a reminder that "democracy" is only a mask to conceal the true nature of imperialism which has an inherent drive to subjugate the neo-colonial countries.

What's needed are revolutionary workers parties to lead the proletariat in a struggle for socialist revolution against the military bonapartists, the religious fundamentalists and all bourgeois political forces, opening the road to the emancipation of women and the liberation of all the oppressed and exploited.

As our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote (*Workers Vanguard* No. 976, 18 March):

> "The Libyan proletariat has clearly been devastated in the current conflict, as migrant workers—a major component of the working class in that country—have fled the chaos, armed violence and racist attacks en masse. The future of the Libyan masses will be decided by working-class struggle that extends beyond the national terrain to include the proletariats of Algeria, Tunisia and, especially, Egypt. That requires the forging of revolutionary working-class parties as part of a genuine Trotskyist Fourth International, which would link the fight for socialist federations of North Africa and of the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers." ■


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WORKERS VANGUARD

# Police Assaults, Arrests, Injunctions
# Defend Longview ILWU Against Bosses' Cops and Courts!

SEPTEMBER 27—Six days ago, the small town of Longview on the Columbia River in Washington State was occupied by an army of police from throughout the surrounding area. Armored SWAT vehicles and rifle-wielding cops in riot gear flooded the streets and closed down roads leading to the town's port. Around the port rail tracks outside EGT Development's newly built grain terminal, which is being run with scab labor, were some 50 protesting members and supporters of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 21. As a train carrying grain appeared, cops swarmed the tracks, handcuffing and arresting ten protesters, including Local 21 president Dan Coffman and wives and mothers of longshoremen. One 57-year-old woman had her rotator cuff torn. When two Local 21 officers rushed to her aid, they were hurled to the ground and cuffed, their faces shoved into the gravel and their eyes directly and repeatedly sprayed with mace. Now they're charged with assaulting the police!

Wagner/Daily News

**September 21: ILWU Local 21 executive board member Kelly Muller being pepper-sprayed and thrown to the ground by cops. A dozen unionists and family members were arrested as EGT union-busters moved grain into Longview terminal.**

This massive display of force by the cops is the latest chapter in the ILWU's struggle against the multinational EGT conglomerate, which is dead set on breaking the union's 80-year hold on work at Pacific Northwest grain terminals. Like every conflict between labor and capital, the confrontation in Longview is a hard-nosed struggle between class forces whose interests are irreconcilable. Which side prevails is determined by the relative strength of the opposing forces. Repeatedly, Local 21 has mobilized militant labor action to stop trains from bringing grain shipments into the terminal. On September 8, the union came out on top when it brought its power to bear as several ports across Washington were idled and picket lines in Longview reinforced. Before the day was over, police and private security had reportedly turned tail and EGT was howling about all the grain strewn on the tracks.

The ILWU and its allies are up against EGT and its allies—the cops, the courts and capitalist government agencies like the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The giant grain exporter wants to establish the $200 million, state-of-the-art Longview terminal as a prime location for shipments to growing markets in Asia. If EGT gets away with refusing to hire Local 21 members as its lease with the Port of Longview obliges it to do, it would embolden other employers up and down the coast to gun for the ILWU. In the face of this deadly threat to the ILWU's future, the rest of the labor movement must rally to the defense of Local 21.

The cop rampages, including a September 7 assault on ILWU International president Robert McEllrath, amply demonstrate the role of the police: to protect the property and profits of the capitalist class through brute force. Following the union victory on September 8, Longview police and Cowlitz County sheriff's deputies unleashed a campaign of terror and intimidation. Trade unionists, among them Local 21 leaders, were accosted in their homes and cars, arrested and jailed by gangs of cops for non-violent misdemeanor citations that ordinarily would not merit arrest, let alone jail. To date, at least 135 ILWU members and supporters have been arrested in connection with union protests.

McEllrath, who had a warrant for his arrest stemming from the union's actions on September 7-8, turned himself in to Cowlitz County authorities yesterday and was released after being given a citation. Officials from both the ILWU and the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), which is based on the East and Gulf coasts, accompanied McEllrath in solidarity and, according to the ILWU, longshoremen all along the West Coast stopped work for 15 minutes.

A federal civil rights lawsuit filed on September 22 by the ILWU against Sheriff Mark Nelson and Police Chief Jim Duscha details one brutal arrest after another. Describing an attack on a Local 21 member and former union official outside her home, the suit states that the cops "grabbed her, threw her down onto her stomach, shoved her onto the hood of her car and handcuffed her with her hands behind her back. Then, before putting her into the police car, two officers proceeded to slam her body onto the side of her car and then onto a wooden fence even though she was already handcuffed." A member of another ILWU local, who is also a minister, was dragged from his home by cops, one of whom brandished a semi-automatic weapon, and taken to a crowded school parking lot where he was handcuffed and arrested in front of his wife and children. Even people just driving vehicles or wearing clothes identifying them as ILWU supporters have been followed and roughed up. This criminalization of longshoremen smacks of the arrests, beatings and worse that the cops mete out to black people every day in America's urban ghettos.

On September 16, some 200 union members and supporters, led by Coffman and ILWU Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet, marched to the Cowlitz County Hall of Justice to offer themselves up for mass arrest. This was a sharp statement against the cops' "made for TV" assaults, in which individual unionists are picked up and hauled off. Some 30 police officers in full riot gear were assembled inside, but the unionists, who waited around for a half hour, were just told to go home. Then, a couple of hours later, the vicious roundups resumed with the arrest of Local 21 vice president Jake Whiteside in front of his children in a church parking lot.

The day before the march, Sundet had sent Sheriff Nelson a letter voicing unionists' anger at the arrests and police brutality, pointing out that those being rounded up were the same ones who had dispersed on his orders from the port railroad tracks on September 7 and were not arrested at the time. The letter nailed the sheriff as "EGT's propagandist" for carrying out a "sensationalized media campaign to mischaracterize union members as lawless criminal aggressor thugs." Among the lies planted in news outlets was the accusation that union members pepper-sprayed policemen when, as the letter states, "it was the other way around."

Sundet's letter made an appeal to the sheriff to "remain neutral" in this conflict, and now the union has launched a petition campaign to recall Nelson. The notion of police "neutrality" is a suicidal illusion. The cops are the hired guns of the capitalists. As one old labor saw goes, there is more education at the end of a policeman's nightstick than in four years of college. During the 1934 West Coast waterfront strike, seven union men were killed, including two gunned down by San Francisco cops on "Bloody Thursday," July 5, which sparked a citywide strike that led to the founding of the ILWU. Unions in the U.S. were built in the course of just such bitter battles against the capitalist state—the cops, courts and military like the National Guard—and its strikebreaking auxiliaries, from the Pinkertons to the Ku Klux Klan. The struggle to organize unions and win real gains is a history of laws broken and injunctions defied.

The Constitution of Bay Area ILWU Local 10 codifies an important corollary lesson coming out of such hard-fought strikes: "No member of the State Militia, or officer or agent of a corporation or association of employers, or a deputized city, county or state police officer, shall be permitted to hold membership in this Union." But the enlistment of port security—the "ILWU Watchmen"—in Bay Area Local 75 is a direct violation of this prohibition. Security guards at the Los Angeles/Long Beach port and elsewhere are also in the ILWU. EGT's own private security force has served as the prosecution's main witnesses against the ILWU. Neither the cops and prison guards nor private security guards have any place in the labor movement!

While the ILWU and every other union might have to fight some battles in the courts, there should be no illusion that the "justice" system is anything but a tool of the capitalist ruling class. In fact, the federal district court where the ILWU lawsuit against the police was filed is the same one coming down like gangbusters on the union. At the request of the NLRB, most of whose members are Democratic Party appointees, this court had earlier issued an injunction prohibiting the ILWU from aggressive picketing. The union was then found in contempt of court for the September 7-8 protests, with the judge giving the company and police carte blanche to come up with figures to set fines against Local 21, which according to the NLRB may reach nearly $300,000. The NLRB, whose purpose is to demobilize labor struggle and maintain class "peace" on behalf of the bosses, is building a case for slapping the union with additional penalties for the September 21 protests.

As we wrote in "ILWU Fights Deadly Threat" (*WV* No. 986, 16 September), "it's been clear from the beginning that EGT wants a non-union facility" in Longview. The company has tried to disguise its union-busting as a "jurisdictional dispute" between the ILWU and scabs in Operating Engineers Local 701, who are working the Longview terminal. Criminally, AFL-CIO head Richard Trumka has sided with the company by promoting this lie. The Trumka bureaucracy wants to squelch the ILWU's battle for fear of undermining the Democratic Party and its leader, Barack Obama, whose 2012 presidential campaign is in trouble.

There have been a number of statements and resolutions from the ILA and other unions in the U.S. in support of Local 21, as well as from dock workers unions overseas and Japan's Doro-Chiba rail workers union. The 24,000-member, Portland-based Joint Council of Teamsters No. 37 has voiced its support for the Longview longsboremen. At the same time, it is Teamsters-affiliated Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen members who are crossing picket lines by driving trains into EGT's Longview terminal. There's a word for this: ***scabbing!***

Some ILWU officials have presented the Longview struggle as a fight between

*continued on page 11*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 988

14 October 2011


## Statehood Charade at UN

# U.S./Israel Tighten Screws on Palestinians

On September 23, Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas formally asked the United Nations Security Council to sponsor the establishment of a state in the West Bank and Gaza by granting the Palestinians full UN membership. The Obama administration declared in advance that it would veto the proposal if it gained broad support in the Security Council. Thousands watching Abbas' speech on outdoor screens across the West Bank cheered thunderously at what they viewed as a step toward relieving the dreadful oppression they suffer under the Zionist jackboot. This is a cruel illusion. As one young man watching the speech declared to the London *Guardian* (23 September), Palestine will remain "basically a big refugee camp. Nothing on the ground will change."

AFP

**Israeli security forces brutalize Palestinian demonstrator at Qalandiya checkpoint in the occupied West Bank, September 21.**

The hopes of Palestinian officials that their appeal to the UN would pressure Israel into granting concessions quickly went up in smoke. Fascistic Zionist settlers in the West Bank, encouraged by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government and the Israeli military, retaliated against the UN bid by burning and defacing mosques, assaulting Palestinians and torching their olive groves. Just hours before Abbas took the podium at the UN, a Palestinian father of seven was killed near Nablus when Israeli soldiers fired on villagers who were gathering to defend their farmland against a mob of settlers.

Several days later, Netanyahu announced the construction of 1,100 new housing units in Gilo, one of a ring of settlements built by the Zionists around East Jerusalem in order to cut it off from the Palestinians in the West Bank. That population has been increasingly confined by Israel's rulers in bantustan-like enclaves demarcated by a heavily guarded wall and separated off by Zionist settlements, "Jewish-only" roads and military checkpoints. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, squeezed by a blockade imposed with U.S. support after Hamas militarily took control of Gaza in 2007, are trapped in an impoverished, devastated ghetto, surrounded by the sea, an electrified fence and a wall along its border with Egypt. The Islamic fundamentalist Hamas appeared torn by the PA's bid at the UN, although some of its spokesmen distanced themselves from Abbas' appeal.

The Obama administration had warned the PA of dire consequences if it brought the issue to the UN, and Congressional Democrats and Republicans voted almost unanimously to cut off aid to the Palestinians if the PA defied Washington's admonition. When Congress then blocked $200 million in aid—threatening food programs, health services and infrastructure projects—the PA aptly termed it "collective punishment." A PA spokesman remarked that "it is ironic to be punished for going to the United Nations."

Not so ironic, really. From the three million killed in the 1950-53 Korean War to the terror bombing of Muammar el-Qaddafi's Libya this year, the UN has acted as a tool of imperialist depredation around the world. The treatment of the Palestinians themselves starkly illuminates the nature of the UN as a den of imperialist thieves and their accomplices and victims. The UN sponsored the foundation of the state of Israel, touching off the 1948 War and the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their lands. It was the UN that disarmed Palestinian fighters during Lebanon's bloody civil war, setting up the 1982 massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. At this year's UN session, the new Libyan state that came into being through NATO bombing easily won recognition while U.S. officials worked furiously to head off any possibility that a Palestinian state might be recognized.

Workers internationally must stand in defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist terror. The Israeli state is backed

*continued on page 8*

## White House Trumpets Killing of U.S. Citizen

# Al-Awlaki Assassination: U.S. State Terror

On September 30 in remote northern Yemen, four men, two of whom were U.S. citizens, were killed by a missile fired from a U.S. pilotless drone. This was no "friendly fire" attack but an assassination carefully planned and organized at the highest levels of the U.S. military and the CIA on orders from the White House. The Obama administration immediately congratulated itself for the murder of Islamic cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, who was dubiously labeled "the leader of external operations for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula." The other U.S. citizen killed, Samir Khan, was involved in producing Al Qaeda's online magazine *Inspire*. From the point of view of the blood-lusting imperialists, this activity qualified him as an enemy "belligerent" whose killing could be dismissed as a casualty of the "global war on terror."

The murder of al-Awlaki sets a significant, ominous precedent. As a U.S. citizen, he was supposed to have some rights to confront and answer the allegations against him. But for the rulers of U.S. imperialism, such rights are forfeited by those deemed "terrorists" or even "terror suspects." The assassination mission was planned for over a year, and every potential legal obstacle was reviewed—and dismissed—by lawyers from the Pentagon, State Department, National Security Council and intelligence agencies, culminating in a secret memorandum by the Justice Department authorizing the killing. It has been reported that the government's "kill list" includes three other U.S. citizens, who have not been publicly identified.

Washington's targeted killing of the New Mexico-born al-Alwaki on foreign soil marks an escalation of the imperialists' "war on terror," which was launched after the September 11 attacks with wholehearted bipartisan support. Defined as a war without end against no readily definable enemy, the "war on terror" has served as the pretext for the murderous occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the imprisonment of "terror suspects" at Guantánamo Bay and other torture centers and the increased shredding of civil liberties of the U.S. population. People have been targeted for "terrorism" investigations for their political views, and the government has enormously expanded domestic wiretapping and other surveillance operations.

Barack Obama, who came into office with avid support from the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy and among the reformist left, pledged to carry out the "global war on terror" with greater effectiveness than the widely reviled Republican Bush administration. While drawing down U.S. forces in Iraq, Obama has escalated the occupation of Afghanistan

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# Geronimo Pratt Refused to Bow

June 12, 2011

I appreciated the timely statement in *Workers Vanguard* No. 982 following the death of Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a courageous former Black Panther Party leader who, throughout his 27-year imprisonment, remained unbowed and unbroken. We can be proud of being in the vanguard of those championing his fight for freedom, while for many years the liberals and reformists virtually abandoned him and other class war prisoners. But I write for a different reason.

As an activist in the Southern California based Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee (formed in the early 1970's to free three black men framed for murdering two cops), I along with a few others attended the farcical trial of Geronimo Pratt. The zeal with which the prosecutors and judge pursued his conviction was truly nauseating. I was in the courtroom the day they convicted him. The cops and the prosecutors could barely hide their smiles. They were thirsting for his blood.

It was noticeable how the fake left and liberals were absent throughout most of the trial. It was mainly a few friends of Pratt, his family, and some of us from the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee who were present.

While shackled but with a determined look on his face throughout the trial, Geronimo made a deep impression on me. In the eyes of the capitalist state, this fighter was a dangerous runaway slave, a captured commander with military knowledge who could lead.

WV Photo

**Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) at San Quentin prison in 1985.**

Those were very difficult days. It was scary, and with so many former revolutionary minded black youth whom I knew dropping out of politics, jailed, or hooked on drugs, I wondered where I would end up.

Without exaggeration I can say that, more than any single individual then, it was seeing how Pratt refused to bow down in that court that made me want to stay in the struggle. He knew the purpose of his conviction and that it was bigger than him.

As the article in *Workers Vanguard* notes, the Black Panther Party's nationalist program "doomed them to isolation in the ghetto."

But I'm afraid it was more than that. It led some of the best subjectively revolutionary elements to make their peace with the racist capitalist system and embrace the very capitalist Democratic Party of imperialist war, racism, and repression that they once opposed.

Don A.

# On NYC Smoking Ban

June 17, 2011

Dear WV

I read with alarm your article "NYC: Anti-Smoking Totalitarianism" [*WV* No. 982, 10 June] as you outright deny the huge body of scientific evidence which shows a link between secondhand smoking (SHS) and increased risk of cancer and other diseases. In support of this position you quote a 20 year EPA report and a short, badly written, suspiciously non-specific Washington Post article written by Gio Batta Gori, a scientist who is fairly open about being a consultant for the tobacco industry and who makes clearly bogus claims such as study results not being consistently reproducible.

You go on to state that even for the studies which show a 19% increase in risk this is not statistically significant (!?). It's been a few years since I studied statistics where as I recall 5% was a general rule but this would vary depending on the data. I believe in epidemiology because very large numbers of people involved even a 2 or 3% risk can mean the unnecessary deaths of thousands of people but they have big problems in detecting such small variance.

In the same issue of WV you quite rightly decry the cutting of safety precautions for construction workers. If accidents were to increase by 19% due to falling safety standards would you not regard these as "statistically significant"?

In addition you state "As for the 19 percent figure, a number this low in such a study could be explained by anything from pure chance to previous family history" which completely ignores the issue of biological plausibility—we already know smoking causes cancer and we already know there is a dose-response curve, the more you smoke the bigger the risk. So it seems likely that exposure to SHS would increase cancer risk, just at a much lower dose.

Does this mean the ICL should change its position on Bloomberg's outdoor smoking ban? Absolutely not, the article makes some very good political points in that regard. Does it mean the ICL should change its position on the ban on indoor smoking in public buildings such as bars and restaurants? That's more difficult to say.

As a former (pre-smoking ban) bar worker myself I spent up to 12 hours a day, 6 days a week in often extremely smokey environments so on the one hand I'm sympathetic to a ban which significantly reduces disease risk along with improving the working environment. On the other hand there is a real issue of individual liberty, the fact the bourgeois state will use any law it can to victimise workers and the oppressed, including smoking bans and the fact that millions of people who are addicted to smoking are now effectively ostracised from these environments which can hit older people particularly hard. Certainly I think smoking areas should be provided for people and good ventilation. And of course what we do in our own homes should be no business of the state.

In any case a political decision has to be based on the facts. And WV have got the facts spectacularly wrong in this case. I suggest you do more research, the 2006 Surgeon General's report on involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke (http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/index.html) would be a good place to start and there are literally hundreds of studies to examine on Pubmed.gov.

After all that I now feel like a cigarette... [author's ellipses]

Kind Regards,
Michael C.

***WV* replies:**

Although conflicted on the issue of indoor smoking bans, Michael C. quite rightly expresses a healthy distrust of the anti-smoking zealots in government and beyond. At the same time, he admonishes us for denying "the huge body of scientific evidence" supposedly showing a link between secondhand smoke and increased risk of life-threatening diseases in our article. In fact, we reviewed such evidence, discussing the 1992 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report by name and "subsequent major studies that tried to find a health risk from secondhand smoke," all of which showed "no statistically meaningful correlation."

Unless such proof someday becomes available, we stand by our longstanding position, which we quoted in the article: "Medical evidence on the effects of 'secondary smoke' is inconclusive, and the obvious solution is to provide adequate ventilation for everyone." However, we did also incorrectly write in regard to the effects of smoking that "for those who don't, but are merely 'exposed' to those who do, *nothing* has been scientifically proved to show that they suffer from secondhand smoke." Cigarette smoke is an irritant, as is all smoke; at issue is at what dose it may become toxic.

On this score, the EPA report, like that from the Surgeon General in 2006, mostly draws on studies of disease frequency in spouses of cigarette smokers. Where elevated risks of lung cancer were observed, the elevations were quite small. While an increased risk of 19 percent might sound like a person has a one in five chance of developing cancer, this is not the case. It refers to a risk that is initially extremely low increasing to one only marginally higher. To put it another way, buying a second lotto ticket will double your chances of winning, but the probability of hitting the big jackpot is still one in several billion.

Such a slight uptick in risk, even assuming it is the 30 percent from the 2006 report, cannot be attributed with any certainty to

*continued on page 8*

TROTSKY

LENIN

## The Necessity of Revolutionary Leadership

*The ongoing world economic depression emphotically underscores the need to forge revolutionory workers parties to leod the proletoriot to power and sweep awoy the copitalist system once and for oll. This point was stressed in a document odopted ot the 1961 Annual Conference of the Socialist Labour League in Britoin that oddressed capitolism's recurrent crises and imperialist rivolries ond the upsurge of liberotion movements in the colonial world. The document was endorsed by the Spartacist Leogue's forebears in the Revolutionory Tendency of the U.S. Socialist Workers Porty.*

Reformists and opportunists of all varieties echo the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie in supposing, and hoping, that the separate manifestations of the fundamental world crisis can be taken one by one and separately remedied. Marxists claim that this is impossible. All such problems are related because of the inextricable connections between them established by imperialism itself. They do not assume, however, that imperialism will somehow collapse because the contradictions which it secretes will eventually bring the system to a halt. Such an idea of automatic downfall is no part of Marxism. The history of the last 40 years has driven home the lesson so often repeated by Lenin and Trotsky, that there are no impossible situations for the bourgeoisie. It survived the challenge of revolution and economic depression between the wars by resort to fascism. It survived the Second World War with the complicity of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaderships—which ensured that the working class would not make a bid for power—and used the breathing space to elaborate new methods of rule and strengthen the economy. Even the most desperate situations can be overcome if only the active intervention of the workers as a class for themselves, with a party and leadership with a perspective of overthrowing capitalism, is not prepared in time.

—"The World Prospect for Socialism," *Labour Review* (Winter 1961)

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

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**No. 988** **14 October 2011**

## Clarification

The graph titled "Change in Share of National Income 1979-2008" on the front page of *WV* No. 985 (2 September) does not show the "enormous growth in wealth at the very top," as written in its caption. Personal income consists of a flow of earnings from various sources, whereas wealth is accumulated assets (minus debts). Under capitalism, the ownership of the means of production is concentrated in the hands of a small class of capitalist families, who expropriate much of the wealth produced by the proletariat. In 2009, the collective wealth of the "Forbes 400" richest Americans was $1.3 trillion, while nearly 25 percent of all households—and 40 percent of black households—had zero or negative net worth.

**Partisan Defense Committee**

## CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

# Mumia Abu-Jamal: Supreme Court Rejects D.A. Appeal to Reinstate Death Sentence

AFP

OCTOBER 11—The U.S. Supreme Court today rejected a petition by the Philadelphia D.A.'s office to restore the death sentence for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The D.A. had sought to reverse an April 26 ruling by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals that upheld for the second time a 2001 decision by District Court judge William Yohn overturning the death sentence on the grounds of faulty jury instructions (see "Federal Appeals Court Orders New Sentencing Hearing," *WV* No. 980, 13 May). The D.A. now has 180 days to convene a new sentencing hearing, the sole purpose of which would be to determine whether Mumia is to again be sentenced to death or will rot in prison for life.

The Supreme Court's ruling dealt a blow, for now, to the prosecution's drive to kill Mumia. But in no way should it justify faith in the capitalist injustice system. Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man who has already spent just under 30 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. Mumia was convicted for the December 1981 killing of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner based on lying testimony extorted by the cops, phony ballistics "evidence" and a "confession" manufactured by the police and prosecutors. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, a supporter of the MOVE organization and well-known journalist, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views (see the July 2006 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!*).

The courts have steadfastly refused to hear the overwhelming evidence of Mumia's innocence, including Arnold Beverly's confession that he was the one who shot and killed Faulkner. As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have always insisted, fighters for Mumia's freedom must look to link his cause to the class struggles of the multiracial proletariat. Trade unionists, opponents of the racist death penalty and fighters for black rights must not rest until Mumia is released from prison hell. ***Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!*** ■

## California

# Sadistic Jailers Crack Down on Prison Hunger Strikers

On September 26, California prisoners renewed their hunger strike against the barbarism of solitary confinement in the state's notorious "supermax" and other prisons. For three weeks in July, thousands of prisoners starved themselves to demand access to sunlight, decent food, weekly phone calls and that human contact be allowed for those locked up in the concrete isolation chambers of the Security Housing Unit (SHU). The strike ended when the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) agreed to allow the prisoners to have wall calendars and woolen caps to wear. The state's jailers claimed these token measures as evidence of the "good faith" of their promises to consider other demands, particularly a review of the "debriefing" procedures. These procedures mandate that in order to get out of solitary, prisoners have to snitch out other inmates as "gang members"—a tag which is a one-way ticket to the SHU.

In a September statement, prisoners at the Pelican Bay SHU wrote that despite the July hunger strike, they "continue to be subjected to CDCR's torturous human rights violations...barbarous policies and practices." As the statement details, even to be allowed to buy art pens and paper or to have their picture taken annually to send to family or friends, SHU prisoners must have a record free of any discipline for a year. While a prison memo promising these "privileges" was being handed out, a jail guard sergeant was ordering his staff to immediately write inmates up for disciplinary violations.

Far from reviewing the "debriefing" procedure, at an August 23 hearing before the California State Assembly's Public Safety Committee, CDCR undersecretary Scott Kernan said that the department planned to *widen* its criteria for sending prisoners to solitary! The label of "security threat" that has been placed on supposed gang members will now be applied to inmates considered to be part of any "disruptive group." The general population yards at the Pelican Bay and Tehachapi prisons are already being converted into SHU units.

Under order by the U.S. Supreme Court, the state of California is being forced to reduce its overcrowded prisons, and the state's jailers are worried there will be less money for them. Noting that solitary confinement costs nearly twice as much as regular prison, the Pelican Bay prisoners' statement pointed out that the CDCR's plans to expand these torture chambers are designed to "maintain their staff and funding status quo." Hellish conditions in the jails are the bread and butter of California's prison guards' "union," one of the most powerful political forces in the state.

Now, prison officials have branded the hunger strike as a "mass disturbance." In a truly Orwellian twist, they have threatened to remove food from the cells of those participating in the strike! A CDCR spokesperson said that 15 hunger strikers in the general population at Pelican Bay have been sent to solitary "because they were identified as coercing other inmates"...into starving themselves! The air conditioning in the SHU is maintained at full blast to keep temperatures freezing. As one strike leader told a lawyer for the prisoners: "It's like arctic air coming through, blowing at top speed. It's torture. They're trying to break us."

Two Bay Area lawyers who served as mediators for the hunger strikers in July have been banned from state prisons as a "security threat." One reported that prisoners are being denied both family and legal visits and that their mail is being stopped.

The brutal and sadistic crackdown on prisoners who are simply asking for some vestige of humanity from their jailers throws into stark relief the organized violence of the capitalist state—its cops, courts, military and prison guards. As we wrote in "Hunger Strike in California Prison Hell" (*WV* No. 984, 5 August):

> "The prisons are the concentrated expression of the depravity of this society, a key instrument in coercing, torturing and brutalizing those who have been cast off as the useless residue of a system rooted in exploitation and racial oppression. Elementary humanity demands that the SHU and all other solitary confinement chambers be abolished. But it will take nothing short of proletarian socialist revolution to destroy the capitalists' prison system and sweep away all the barbaric institutions of the bourgeois state." ■

## Final Unraveling of S.F. 8 Frame-Up

# Charges Against Francisco Torres Dismissed

SAN FRANCISCO—On August 18, Superior Court judge Philip Moscone dismissed charges against Francisco Torres, bringing to an end a decades-long frame-up of the San Francisco 8 (SF8). Former members of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army, the SF8—now ranging in age from their 50s to their 70s—were falsely charged for the 1971 killing of a San Francisco police officer. After previous attempts to prosecute them had fallen through, the eight were charged and dragged through the courts beginning in 2007. In resurrecting its vendetta against former black radicals, the capitalist state had a dual purpose: to settle the score against those who fought for black freedom over 40 years ago and to warn that such political activity would be treated as "domestic terrorism."

The victory for Torres is a genuine setback for the rulers and their state. Charges against five of the defendants had already been dropped when prosecutors admitted that they had no evidence against them. Two others, Jalil Muntaqim and Herman Bell, made decisions to accept plea bargains with reduced charges of conspiracy and manslaughter. The two have languished in prison for decades in a separate frame-up conviction as part of the "New York 3" case (see "COINTELPRO Charges Dropped Against Four SF8 Defendants," *WV* No. 941, 29 August 2009). ***Freedom for Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim!***

The persecution of the SF8 was a continuation of the FBI's COINTELPRO operation of the 1960s and '70s, part of the government's drive to destroy the Panthers through infiltration, repression and outright murder. The SF8 case was constructed on concealment and destruction of evidence, false testimony and outright police torture, such as a 1973 "interrogation" of three Panthers who were blindfolded and beaten for days and were shocked with electric cattle prods on their genitals and anuses. In 1975, a San Francisco judge threw out their "confessions" because they had been coerced through torture.

The eight were finally charged in January 2007 as one of Democrat Jerry Brown's first acts as California state attorney general. This served Brown well when he later ran for governor and sought the support of the police and prison guards. Held on $3 million bail each, the SF8 were dragged into court in shackles and handcuffs during several months of pretrial hearings, painting a false portrait of the men as dangerous criminals. At a bail hearing in June 2007, the prosecutor argued to deny bail explicitly on the basis that these men had been members of the Panthers and/or the Black Liberation Army, claiming that their purpose was to "kill cops as a method of social change." This lie has long been wielded by cops, courts and prosecutors to railroad Panthers to prison and even death row, as in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was falsely convicted for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer.

Speaking at the Partisan Defense Committee's 2009 Holiday Appeal fundraiser in New York for class-war prisoners, Francisco Torres stressed that "for those of you who still think these dirty tactics and COINTELPRO programs don't exist,...they still prevail and persist." In defense of the SF8, supporters of the PDC and members of the Labor Black League for Social Defense attended hearings and rallies outside the courthouse sponsored by the Committee for Defense of Human Rights. In publicizing and protesting such frame-ups, we seek to instill the understanding that the labor movement and all fighters for black rights must take up the struggle against capitalist repression. ■

# The Mau Mau Uprising Against British Imperialism

*The following article originally appeared in* Workers Hammer *No. 215 (Summer 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.*

In April four elderly black Kenyans appeared in the High Court in London seeking recognition of atrocities committed against them during British imperialism's brutal colonial rule. The Kenyan claimants, Ndiku Mutua, Paulo Nzili, Wambugu Wa Nyingi and Jane Muthoni Mara, are survivors of the barbaric torture that was meted out to countless thou-

WORKERS HAMMER

sands of black Africans in detention camps between 1952 and 1961. Of the four claimants (a fifth died before the High Court hearing) Jane Mara was subjected to sexual abuse, one man was castrated and another was beaten unconscious during an atrocity in which eleven men were clubbed to death. British imperialism pillaged and exploited Kenya and used savage repression to crush the anti-colonial revolt known as the Mau Mau uprising.

The survivors are demanding that the British state take responsibility for their treatment in the camps and that the government pay around £2 million [$3.3 million], a trifling sum, into a welfare fund. With swinish racist arrogance, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) insists that Britain cannot be held responsible, and that any atrocities that may have been committed under colonial rule became the responsibility of the Kenyan government that took over at the time of independence in 1963. Furthermore, says the FCO, too much time has elapsed for the claims to be valid.

The High Court has yet to decide whether or not the case will proceed to trial. But if the British state had got its way, the evidence in this case would never have seen the light of day. Since independence, the former colonial overlords have kept a tight lid on the documentary record of repression in Kenya. Nonetheless, much effort by researchers and advocates for the survivors has resulted in a significant victory. In May the FCO was forced to hand over 300 boxes of files, some 17,000 pages, including material relating to the suppression of the Mau Mau revolt. The departing colonialists destroyed many of the files at independence and removed others, having "made a calculated decision not to hand over any of its colonial era files to the Kenyan government" (guardian.co.uk, 5 April). A letter dated 7 November 1967, issued under Harold Wilson's Labour government, explains that the general practice at independence was not to hand over files that "might embarrass HMG [Her Majesty's Government] or other governments" or members of the police or military forces (guardian.co.uk, 5 April).

The mass torture and imprisonment of Kenyans during the uprising has long been documented by historians. To this day, any attempt to expose the truth of what happened has been sharply contested by apologists for imperialism. Caroline Elkins, author of the book *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (2005), who is an expert witness for the survivors in the current court case, noted that: "My book was resoundingly criticised at the time of its publication. Historian Andrew Roberts wrote that I had committed 'blood libels against Britain'" (*Guardian*, 14 April).

Popperfoto

**Langata concentration camp near Nairobi, 1954. British imperialists imprisoned and tortured thousands of Kikuyu during Mau Mau revolt.**

Elkins estimates that between 160,000 and 320,000 people were detained in camps and at least 100,000 killed. David Anderson, author of another major work, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of the Empire* (2005), documents 1,090 hangings of alleged Mau Mau. Mark Curtis in *Web of Deceit* (2003) estimates that 150,000 black Kenyans died as a result of British policy in this period.

The British capitalist rulers have carried out mass murder and torture on an immense scale, from the brutal occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq to the bombing of Libya today. Much of the wealth that laid the foundations of British capitalism was acquired from trade in African slaves. Brutal subjugation of the colonial world was part and parcel of imperialism's drive to secure world markets, cheap labour and raw materials. From Kenya to Aden, Cyprus, Malaya, Nigeria and the Indian subcontinent, the globe is strewn with colonial victims of the British Empire's pursuit of profits.

In Kenya the colonial rulers imprisoned in concentration camps a large proportion of the million and a half Kikuyu people, the country's largest ethnic group. The Mau Mau rebellion was essentially a peasant-based revolt of the landless Kikuyu people against colonial rule that had dispossessed them of their lands, the basis of their existence. Although it was ultimately defeated, the uprising forced an end to colonial rule. In its terminal years, British rule consisted of naked state repression, culminating in an official "State of Emergency" lasting from 1952 to 1960. Arrayed against the Mau Mau was the armed might of the British colonialists combined with that of their Kenyan stooges, including the Home Guard and other forces. The colonial regime co-opted a layer of rich peasants composed of land-owning, educated Christians. These "loyalist" Kenyans included Kikuyu landowners who were deeply hostile to the landless Kikuyu masses and supported the British in suppressing them. This deep social polarisation within Kenyan society is key to understanding the independence struggle in Kenya and its outcome.

With independence in 1963 British imperialism was forced to relinquish direct rule over Kenya, just as it had been driven out of many of its other colonial holdings in Africa and Asia following World War II. Reverting to indirect domination, the imperialists now relied on the national bourgeoisie which in turn became more directly the oppressor of the masses. Nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta, who had been locked up for supposed Mau Mau sympathies, was released from prison in 1961. He was correctly regarded by the imperialists as safe hands for maintaining their interests in the region. Kenyatta had denounced the Mau Mau and was regarded by the more militant leaders of the movement as a traitor to their goals of land and freedom, which indeed he was.

Getty

**London: Kenyans tortured under British colonial rule gather outside High Court, April 7.**

The national bourgeoisie that came to power in Kenya was incapable of resolving any of the fundamental problems forced on the Kenyan masses by imperialist subjugation—dire poverty, lack of education and all the attendant social and economic backwardness. The land-hungry peasants did not regain their lost lands; the plantations and large white-owned farms were not expropriated. The outcome of the Kenyan independence struggle confirms in the negative the programme of permanent revolution codified by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, who with Lenin led the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution established the dictatorship of the proletariat, expropriated the landlords and capitalists and granted land to the peasants. The programme of permanent revolution means that in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the proletariat must draw behind it the millions of peasant poor to oust the colonial powers in a struggle for a socialist revolution against the local bourgeoisie. This requires a Leninist-Trotskyist party dedicated to international proletarian revolution both in the neo-colonial countries and in the imperialist centres.

## Imperialist Subjugation of Kenya

Britain first laid claim to Kenya and other East African territory when Africa was carved up by the imperialist powers in the 1880s. The rapid expansion of the system of world trade fuelled competition between dominant capitalist powers to establish spheres of influence and to control land, raw materials, markets and sources of cheap labour. In contrast to Congo and South Africa, where the imperialists extracted enormous mineral wealth, British interest in Kenya was mainly strategic. To control access to the source of the Nile, the British built a railroad from Mombasa on the Indian Ocean coast to Lake Victoria in inland Kenya. Completed in 1901, the railway was financed by loans from the British government. The colonial overlords decided the loans would be repaid, and the cost of administering the colony would be met, through profitably farming the millions of acres of land through which the railway ran. To make this land productive, they brought in white settlers, mainly from Britain but also from South Africa, to produce cash crops.

The first British settlers arrived in 1902, lured by the British government's promise of cheap land and unlimited cheap labour. Writer Colin Leys describes the rationale behind it thus: "The settlers would invest capital and produce crops; the railway would earn revenue by carrying them to the coast, and by carrying the imports inland they would earn abroad," while "the government would finance its activities by levying tariffs on these imports." The British capitalist rulers were determined to force the toiling black masses to bear the cost of imperialist domination over them. As Leys describes it:

> "The highlands were 'alienated' to Europeans; that is, Europeans bought the

land at nominal prices from the colonial administration. But at first they had neither the knowledge nor the capital to farm it very differently from the Africans on their land. They had not, moreover, come to Kenya to work as peasants. Their 'farms' were extremely large—an average of over 2,400 acres per 'occupier' in 1932. There was therefore only one solution, to make the Africans work for them. This the Africans had no reason to do, unless the Europeans had been willing to pay in wages more than Africans could earn from farming on their own account. But such wages would have meant little or no profit for the Europeans. Therefore Africans had to be compelled to work, partly by force, partly by taxation, and partly by preventing them from having access to enough land or profitable crops to enable them to pay taxes without working for wages."

—*Underdevelopment in Kenya* (1975)

## Roots of Nationalist Revolt

In order to claim the farmlands of the Central Highlands, part of the Great Rift Valley, the British slaughtered Kikuyus by the thousands. Many indigenous Kenyans driven off their lands were pushed onto "native reserves" set up by the colonial regime in 1915. These reserves were separated by ethnic grouping as part of reinforcing divisions among the Kenyans. As the population in the Kikuyu reserves grew and more British settlers seized the arable land, subsistence became even more difficult. The landless and impoverished black population was subjected to a system of racist laws regulating land, as well as a poll tax and a hut tax. There were also pass laws (*kipande*) like those in South Africa, prohibiting free movement including in the search for employment. Access to education for the poorest was nil; a small privileged layer was able to attend schools run by Christian churches.

The early British settlers were heavily drawn from the notoriously racist aristocracy. According to Robert Edgerton (*Mau Mau, An African Crucible*, 1990) "the Norfolk hotel, where they congregated when they visited Nairobi, quickly became known as the 'House of Lords'" and "their goal was to recreate the Virginia plantocracy in which white gentlemen of breeding and leisure oversaw vast plantations worked by black men." Sir Charles Eliot, the High Commissioner appointed to rule the East Africa Protectorate, as it was then known, proclaimed Kenya a "white man's country."

Outside the reserves other displaced Kikuyu became squatters on the white settlers' farms in conditions akin to serfdom, raising their own livestock and crops for local sale in return for working the settler's plantation. Beginning in 1925, with a surplus of available workers, the colonial government and settlers turned the screw on squatters. Rights of tenancy and to own livestock were cut back to the point where squatters laboured for the white farmers for below-subsistence wages. During the depression and World War II, forced labour was instituted to keep the settlers' plantations functioning. By the mid-1940s there were over 200,000 registered squatters in the so-called White Highlands. With market prices for their produce set far below what the settlers earned for the same crop, the squatters were reduced to starvation conditions. Floggings by landlords were commonplace and squatters were evicted if they refused to sign new labour contracts on worse terms.

In the years leading up to the revolt the squatters were transformed from independent tenant-producers to rural, desperately impoverished wage labourers. Resistance among squatters took the form of illegal cultivation and sale of produce, mass refusal to sign new contracts and in some areas organised strikes. As described in a study by Frank Furedi, by the late 1940s, this resistance became "transformed into a militant wing of Kenyan nationalism." The Mau Mau revolt was "the last stand of the Kikuyu squatter before his final destruction as an independent peasant producer" (*The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1989).

Although there were other ethnic groups among the squatter population, the Kikuyus were the most numerous and were subjected to special repressive measures. Pastoral groups such as the Nandi people, who included many police, were regarded by the colonialists as potential allies and largely exempted from the anti-squatter measures. By the late 1940s the movement of resistance among the squatters had linked up with resistance in the reserves and Kikuyu radicals in Nairobi.

Kenya's agricultural resources—principally coffee, tea and sisal—were profitable cash crops grown for the export market. World War II led to increased British investment in mechanisation, resulting in vastly increased profits for the settlers while forcing more black labourers off the farms and onto the reserves, which were already unable to support their population. This fed the disparity between the landed elite and the desperate and landless masses among the black population. By 1948 the population of the colony comprised some 30,000 European settlers, 5.2 million indigenous black Africans, and 98,000 Asians who were brought in as cheap labour but were banned from owning arable land and composed a mercantile layer. The White Highlands—the best farmland in the colony—was in the hands of the white settlers, some 0.7 per cent of the population.

Kenya National Archives

**April 1954: British colonial forces rounded up all Kikuyu in Nairobi in "Operation Anvil."**

During WWII more than 75,000 black Kenyans joined the British Army and fought in the King's African Rifles and other regiments in Africa, Asia and the Near East. But in contrast to white settlers who served in the British Army and were rewarded with land and low-interest loans, blacks returned to worse conditions than when they left. Many returning black soldiers were inspired by independence movements like those sweeping the Indian subcontinent. With no land, some gravitated to Nairobi where the scarcity of jobs and housing forced many into an urban lumpenproletariat. Amid mounting bitterness towards the colonial power for which they had risked their lives, landless war veterans formed an organisation called the Forty Group which would go on to play a key role in the Mau Mau.

## Divisions Within African Nationalism

The Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) had been founded in 1924 in opposition to the theft of Kikuyu land and lack of education. Jomo Kenyatta, an educated Kikuyu who had spent some 16 years in Europe, was a leading member of the KCA at this time. On behalf of the KCA he went to London in 1929 to pressure the colonial government for better terms for the Kikuyu. But contrary to a perspective for independence, his programme was for "meaningful cooperation between the colonial state and his people" (*Mau Mau and Kenya*, Wunyabari Maloba, 1993). Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1946 where he was widely revered as the Kikuyus' leader, the "Burning Spear" who symbolised the growing anti-colonial sentiment among the black population. After the KCA was outlawed in 1941 the Kenya African Union (KAU) was formed in 1944. In 1947 Kenyatta became the leader of the KAU, nominally a nationalist party of all African ethnic groups but dominated by the Kikuyu. The KAU included some trade union militants; its leaders were educated and some had lived abroad. Its demands centred on better conditions for the black population under colonial rule. Although the KAU was for independence in principle it did not see this as attainable in the near future.

The organised working class was relatively weak, but was young and combative. The trade union component of the KAU leadership represented urban workers including government clerks, taxi drivers, shop workers and others. The African Workers Federation was formed by Chege Kibachia, who organised a strike of dockers—a potentially strategic workforce—in the port city of Mombasa. He was arrested in 1947 while fighting for a general strike in Nairobi and detained in a remote outpost for ten years. In 1949 the East African Trade Union Congress was formed by Fred Kubai, who was later imprisoned, and an Asian communist, Makhan Singh. This organisation was banned in 1950 and Singh was deported and held in a remote area near the Ethiopian border for eleven years.

By late 1947 evicted squatters had become frustrated at the lack of any gains through the gradualist methods of the KAU. Members of the KCA led a militant illegal society and began using the Kikuyu oath to cement unity in struggle. The Kikuyu fighters referred to themselves as the Land Freedom Army or "the movement" but came to be called Mau Mau. The colonial rulers seized on the oathing to demonise Mau Mau and to legitimise savage repression against the Kikuyu people. The Mau Mau became the vehicle for mass resistance to the eviction of squatters from white farms. The core of the guerrilla fighters, led by WWII veterans, trained and lived in the forests of the Aberdare Mountains and Mount Kenya. Their weaponry was sparse and they were barely fed and clothed—and then only due to the heroic efforts of sympathisers in the reserves.

It is impossible to overstate the extent of racist hysteria among the settlers and colonial government, which reverberated in the pages of the *Daily Mail* in Britain. Whole pseudoscientific theories were concocted about the "illness" particular to black Africans. Typical was the ranting of colonial secretary Oliver Lyttelton who wrote: "The Mau Mau oath is the most bestial, filthy, nauseating incantation which perverted minds can ever have brewed" (quoted in *Mau Mau, An African Crucible*).

The colonial state used widespread repression between 1950-52. However, the audacious daylight killing by Mau Mau of a prominent loyalist chief in October 1952 was seized on by the new colonial governor, Evelyn Baring, as a pretext for declaring a State of Emergency and letting loose a reign of terror by the security forces. Kenyatta and other KAU leaders were imprisoned and later convicted of masterminding Mau Mau in a sensationalised and rigged show trial.

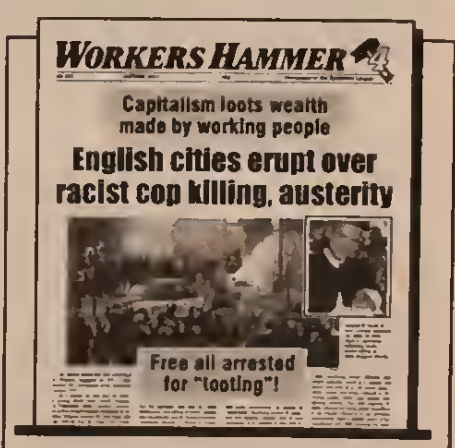
The deep division between wealthy loyalist Kikuyu and the landless poor was brought home in the Lari massacre in March 1953. Lari, near the Aberdare forest not far from Nairobi, symbolised the dispossession of land once farmed by peasants and systematically stolen, much of it now in the hands of wealthy loyalists. Mau Mau fighters killed a major loyalist chief and some 97 others at Lari, indiscriminately targeting families, including many women and children. In retaliation, up to 400 Kikuyu were slaughtered by the government forces, including the Home Guard, which was a key military force alongside the British Army and the colonial forces. Eventually 71 people were hanged for the Lari killings. This episode sharply fed the racist frenzy among the settlers and in Britain and increased the polarisation among the Kikuyu people.

Under the State of Emergency the settlers, British Army and Home Guard were permitted to summarily execute anyone who failed to stop when ordered. Thousands of Kikuyu were shot on sight. The Kenya Regiment and Kenya Police Reserve, both made up of settlers, were notoriously brutal. However, many authors also stress the extreme brutality of the Home Guard, loyalists who often had personal scores to settle with their neighbours. And they were not few: there was in fact an aspect of civil war to the Mau Mau uprising, between those who had benefited from co-operation with colonialism and those who were dispossessed and recipients only of brutality and exploitation. There is a similarity to the French colonial war in Algeria that took place at the same time, in which the French imperialists killed a million people—over a tenth of the population. In both cases there was a colonial settler population and a large loyalist militia co-opted from among the indigenous population.

Virtually the entire population of one and a half million Kikuyu were rounded up and "screened" during the Emergency. In Nairobi, where the rebel command was based, the colonial forces carried out a devastating month-long siege in April 1954 known as Operation Anvil, in which all Kikuyu in the city were rounded up and up to 30,000 were taken away for further "interrogation." Screenings were usually performed by loyalist Kikuyu who wore hoods to conceal their identities from people they had often known their entire lives. With a nod of the head, these stooges sent their neighbours to detention camps. The camps were part of a vast system of prisons, interrogation centres and torture outposts known as the "Pipeline." This included over a hundred camps and prisons, not counting the camps run by individual loyalist chiefs and white settlers throughout the Rift Valley and central provinces. In the camps, jails and screening centres Kikuyu were starved, beaten and tortured until they "confessed."

In 1954 the government began the "villagisation" policy of uprooting Kikuyu and resettling them in new villages—actually

*continued on page 6*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# Kenya...

*(continued from page 5)*

barbed wire-enclosed concentration camps under the control of the Home Guard and military. The villages the Kikuyu left behind were burned down and their livestock confiscated. The aim was to cut off the Mau Mau fighters' supply lines by virtually imprisoning that part of the Kikuyu population not already in detention camps. Between June 1954 and October 1955, 1,077,500 Kikuyu were relocated to 854 "villages." One survivor recounted to Caroline Elkins the treatment of the "villagers" by the Home Guard and British:

> "Some people who had refused to confess were being put in sacks, one covering the lower part of their bodies while the other covered the upper part. Then petrol or paraffin would be poured over the sacks, and those in charge would order them to be lit. The people inside would die writhing in the flames. Many people were dying every day. And it was the people who refused to confess, even after all the bad things that were being done to them; they were always killed in order to instill fear into others who might think of concealing the truth."
>
> —*The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*

By 1954-55, the colonial government undertook a programme of land consolidation called the Swynnerton Plan which anticipated the land settlement that would be agreed at independence. The plan aimed to reinforce class divisions, rewarding loyalists with large parcels of land, declaring: "Former government policy will be reversed and able, energetic or rich Africans will be able to acquire more land and bad or poor farmers less, creating a landed and a landless class. This is a normal step in the evolution of a country" (quoted in *Underdevelopment in Kenya*).

By late 1956 the guerrillas had been militarily defeated but mass detention and torture continued into 1959. That same year, public opinion in Britain turned sharply against colonial rule in Kenya when evidence came to light of a massacre in Hola camp, a particularly brutal detention centre for Mau Mau, in which eleven men were beaten to death in March.

Kenya achieved independence in an international context in which British imperialism had suffered profound decline following WWII and national independence struggles had forced an end to colonial rule in India and were raging throughout Africa. The war on the part of Britain, France, Germany, Japan and the United States was an interimperialist conflict in which the working people and oppressed masses had no side. The working class did however have a side in defence of the Soviet workers state. The Soviet Union was no longer the revolutionary workers state that it was under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, having undergone a political degeneration, beginning in 1923-24, under the bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin. Nevertheless it remained a degenerated workers state until counterrevolution triumphed in 1991-92. It was the Soviet army's victory over the imperialist armies of Nazi Germany that ended the carnage of WWII.

Following the war the imperialists ramped up their anti-Soviet Cold War and in the 1950s a central preoccupation of the colonial powers in Africa was to curtail the influence of the Soviet Union, which had provided support to nationalist movements, albeit within the framework of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism. At the time, "anti-imperialist" rhetoric poured forth from bourgeois-nationalist leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, leader of newly independent Ghana, and Patrice Lumumba in the former Belgian Congo, who was murdered by the CIA in 1961. In 1960 South African troops massacred 69 black activists at Sharpeville who were protesting the hated apartheid pass laws. The CIA worked with South African armed forces and in 1962 tipped them off to Nelson Mandela's whereabouts, leading to his 27-year imprisonment.

A. Hopf

no credit

**Left: Nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta (center) in British detention. Right: Kenyatta taking oath of office as Kenya's first president, 1963.**

## Kenyatta: Henchman of Imperialism

In a 1957 speech then-British prime minister Harold Macmillan said, referring to the peoples of Africa, "if they are exposed to the full force of nationalism, it is up to us to see that they are steered away from Communism" (quoted in *African Affairs*, January 1970). Jomo Kenyatta was certainly an asset to the imperialists in that regard. When released from detention in August 1961 he was still widely revered by the masses and seen as the leader who would take Kenya to *Uhuru* (freedom). As the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who was imprisoned for his outspoken criticisms of the Kenyatta government, noted: "Looking at Kenyatta people tended to see what they wanted to see rather than what there was: petty bourgeois vacillations and opportunism" (quoted in Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*).

Kenyatta preached "forgiveness" towards the murderous chiefs and Home Guard who had been the eager jailers and torturers of the Kikuyu masses, saying they were "all brothers and sisters and there should be no revenge." He assured the European landowners their property rights were safe. He became the leader of the Kenya African National Union party, composed of mainly Kikuyu and Luo people, which saw itself as successor to the KAU and which was voted into government in 1963. Formal independence of Kenya was granted in December of that year.

With regard to the all-important question of land ownership, Kenyatta & Co. accepted a rotten deal which allowed for the rich Kikuyu to buy land from the white settlers, for which they could obtain loans from the British government. The large plantations and ranches owned by foreign capital were untouched. Needless to say the mass of peasants remained landless. Kenyatta and his cronies were prepared to give the white settlers everything; the black peasants received only continued poverty and repression. Mau Mau veterans who rejected the deal formed a new Kenya Land and Freedom Army demanding the return of stolen lands. The Kenyatta government cracked down on these fighters, sentencing them to long prison terms. As one of the former leaders of the radical wing of the KAU, B.M. Kaggia, commented bitterly: "We were struggling to regain our own lands which were stolen by the British colonial government. We were not fighting for the right to buy our own land" (*East African Standard*, 22 April 1965). Kenyatta turned to the police and army, just like the British who had detained him. A famous anecdote tells of a meeting two years after independence between president Kenyatta and former colonial governor Baring who was visiting. Baring said: "By the way, I was sitting at that actual desk when I signed your detention order twenty years ago." Kenyatta replied: "If I had been in your shoes at the time I would have done exactly the same."

Under capitalist rule, much of the wealth of the former colony continued to flow into the coffers of the erstwhile colonial masters. After independence Britain continued to dominate the economy in Kenya. The rising black bourgeoisie were at one with the propertied settlers in stifling the Asian entrepreneurs and ensuring racist economic policies and legislation discriminating against Asian-owned enterprise. Such policies culminated in the mass expulsion of Asians in 1967-68 in Kenya under so-called "Africanisation." Soon after in Uganda, this same policy was carried out by Idi Amin to a particularly brutal degree.

The bourgeois nationalists who came to power in Kenya reinforced tribal divisions and upheld backward anti-woman practices. From the 1920s, the Kikuyu-based KCA was a vigorous defender of female genital mutilation (FGM). In response to a 1929 campaign waged by the Christian churches in Kenya in alliance with the educated elite against FGM, the KCA and Kenyatta defended FGM as part of "African culture," thus condoning this retrograde and barbaric practice which is widespread today in parts of Africa, Asia and the Near East. There is nothing new in the British imperialist rulers hypocritically purporting to defend women's rights in the colonial world—such as opposing *suttee* (immolation of widows) in India and the veil in the Islamic world—as a cynical ploy to dress up imperialist occupation as a "civilising mission." While we fight every aspect of imperialist oppression, we vehemently oppose practices such as FGM, an especially brutal aspect of the oppression of women which maims them and means a lifetime of excruciating pain. (See "The Crime of Female Genital Mutilation," *Women and Revolution* No. 41, Summer/Autumn 1992.)

## For Permanent Revolution Throughout Africa

To this day Kenyan society is riven by murderous tribal and ethnic violence which is a legacy of colonial rule. At the time of Kenyatta's death we wrote that the "Grand Old Man" of Kenya rose to the presidency as a Kikuyu tribalist. We added:

> "An Oxford-educated elite may be at home in the capitals of Europe, but as soon as any serious social unrest breaks out, the underlying tribalism and other indices of backwardness are quickly bared. This is not merely a holdover from the past: imperialism actually intensified and formalized ethnic rivalries with its divide-and-rule policies. Today the same patterns are fostered by the requirements of maintaining a political base in an environment of massive poverty."
>
> —*Workers Vanguard* No. 214, 8 September 1978

A workers and peasants government in Kenya would expropriate the highly mechanised and capital-intensive large white-owned farms and transform them into modern large-scale collective and state farms. Councils of workers and rural toilers would decide on land distribution. A collectivised economy must be extended to neighbouring countries in the context of a socialist federation in sub-Saharan Africa.

The proletariat is the only class with the social power to bring the capitalist system to its knees and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat. The powerful South African proletariat is key to a revolutionary perspective in the whole region. Our comrades of Spartacist South Africa (SSA) fight to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution—for a black-centred workers government. Adequate housing for the millions in the townships, squatter camps and villages, electricity and water for the entire population, free quality education, the eradication of *lobola* (bride price) and other traditional patriarchal practices oppressive to women: these desperately needed measures require the socialist transformation of the economy and society under the dictatorship of the proletariat, fighting to promote socialist revolution throughout the African continent and worldwide. As a recent article written by the SSA said:

> "As part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa, a black-centred workers government would fight to extend revolution to the imperialist centres of the U.S., West Europe and Japan. It will take an international socialist planned economy to lift the urban and rural masses out of poverty and create a classless society of material abundance—the beginning of a communist society. This is the essence of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution."
>
> —*Workers Vanguard* No. 964, 10 September 2010 ■


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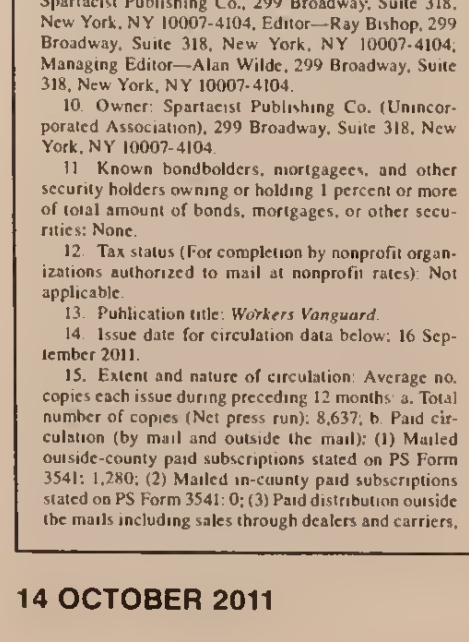
# Al-Awlaki...

*(continued from page 1)*

and massively expanded drone attacks, slaughtering villagers from Pakistan to Yemen and Somalia. The assassination of Osama bin Laden by Navy SEAL commandos in Pakistan in May was an act of imperialist arrogance typical of the U.S. "cops of the world." Now, by assassinating al-Awlaki, the Obama administration has declared in effect that a U.S. citizen designated a terrorist can be summarily executed: no legal charges, no trial.

The decision by the White House to place al-Awlaki on a kill list was made in the aftermath of the failed plot to blow up a jet over Detroit in December 2009. The alleged bomber, whose burning underwear was extinguished by fellow passengers on board the flight, seems to have found al-Awlaki inspirational. The *New York Times* (8 October) noted that the secret Justice Department memo justified the plot against al-Awlaki "despite an executive order banning assassinations, a federal law against murder, protections in



Spillers/NY Times

**Anwar al-Awlaki in Virginia mosque, October 2001.**

the Bill of Rights and various strictures of the international laws of war." In fact, the U.S. rulers had already dispensed with such legal formalities in pursuing the "war on terror."

A case in point is the persecution of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was arrested at Chicago's O'Hare airport in May 2002. Declared an "unlawful enemy combatant" accused of planning to set off a "radioactive bomb," Padilla was eventually disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina, where he rotted for over three years without any charges filed against him. Padilla was tortured with sensory deprivation, hooded and forced to stand in stress positions for long periods of time and threatened with imminent execution. He was also forbidden to meet with attorneys or family. In 2005, the government finally filed ludicrous "conspiracy" charges against him. After a show trial, Padilla was sentenced in 2007 to more than 17 years in prison.

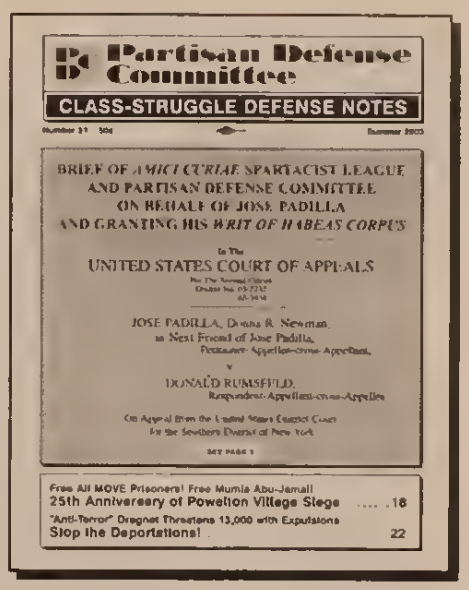
Reuters

**Miranshah, Pakistan: Mass funeral for victims of U.S. drone attack, June 16.**

In 2002 and 2003, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee submitted "friends of the court" briefs on behalf of Padilla, warning that his case posed "the evisceration of the rights and privileges of citizenship embodied in the first ten Amendments to the Constitution and secured on the battlefield of the Civil War and in class and social struggle over the past hundred and more years" (printed in *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* No. 31, Summer 2003). Explaining the ramifications of the government's phony construct of an open-ended "war" on terrorism, the brief stated:

> "Taking the Executive's position to its conclusion, the assertion of its right to apply martial law means not only that the imperial President can detain enemy captives until the war ends, i.e., indefinitely; but also he has the prerogative to shoot enemy combatants engaged in active hostilities. In the 'war against terrorism' that translates to the right to assassinate anyone, anywhere in the world alleged to be a terrorist, not just on foreign soil (as the U.S. has already claimed the right to do), but within the United States."

The killing of al-Awlaki came shortly after a federal appeals court in Atlanta ruled that the sentencing of Jose Padilla was too lenient. We demand: Free Jose Padilla now!



Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

BRIEF OF *AMICI CURIAE* SPARTACIST LEAGUE AND PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF JOSE PADILLA AND GRANTING HIS *WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS*

In The
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

JOSE PADILLA, Donna R. Newman, as Next Friend of Jose Padilla,
Petitioner-Appellee-Cross-Appellant,
v.
DONALD RUMSFELD,
Respondent-Appellant-Cross-Appellee

Free All MOVE Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
25th Anniversary of Powelton Village Siege .... 18
"Anti-Terror" Dragnet Threatens 13,000 with Expulsions
Stop the Deportations! 22

**SL/PDC *amici curiae* brief on behalf of Jose Padilla can be obtained for $.50. Order from/pay to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013-0099.**

Al-Awlaki's father, together with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Center for Constitutional Rights, had brought a lawsuit raising a constitutional challenge against the Obama administration for designating his son for assassination. The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) froze al-Awlaki's assets and made it illegal for any attorney to provide him legal services without first obtaining a license from OFAC itself. The ACLU requested such a license, but OFAC did not even respond. This left al-Awlaki with zero rights, zero representation, no access to his own funds—obliterating any chance of legally challenging his impending assassination. Meanwhile, the alleged evidence of his terrorist activities remains secret.

In December 2010, a judge threw out the lawsuit on the grounds that the issue of targeting for assassination was a "political question" to be taken up by the executive branch—i.e., the White House has carte blanche to decide whom it targets for death. Furthermore, the judge stated that "no U.S. citizen may simultaneously avail himself of the U.S. judicial system and evade U.S. law enforcement authorities," effectively declaring that al-Awlaki had sacrificed his rights by hiding from the government that was intending to kill him! The judge's deference to Executive Office removed any remaining legal obstacle for the White House to authorize its murder mission.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, we warned that the laws and measures initially targeting immigrants from overwhelmingly Muslim countries would also be used to eviscerate the rights of the population as a whole, especially endangering the oppressed black population and targeting the labor movement as well. We stressed as well that what the government is actually able to get away with will ultimately be determined by the level of social struggle. As Obama has broken new ground in the assault on constitutional rights, it is important to understand that none of the rights and gains that working people hold dear will be secure as long as the capitalists hold power.

As communists, we have no sympathy for retrograde Islamic fundamentalists and the Al Qaeda terrorists. But we recognize that the greatest terror threat comes from the imperialist rulers. It is in the class interests of the proletariat to oppose the imperialist wars and occupations and the assaults on democratic rights carried out by the capitalist rulers. Our aim is to build a revolutionary workers party that will mobilize the social power of the proletariat, at the head of all the exploited and oppressed, to sweep away this capitalist system of repression and war. Our model is the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin, which led the working class of Russia to power in the October Revolution of 1917. As Lenin described in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), a revolutionary party must act as the tribune of the people, "able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; ...able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation," and setting forth socialist convictions and democratic demands "in order to clarify for ***all*** and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat." ■


**STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION**

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# Palestine...

*(continued from page 1)*

to the hilt by the Democratic and Republican parties of U.S. imperialism, the biggest enemy of working people and the oppressed around the globe, and is supported as well by the rulers of Germany and other capitalist powers. To defend its interests in the oil-rich Near East, U.S. imperialism each year pumps some $3 billion in military aid to Israel and shells out another $1.3 billion for Egypt's military, relying as well on the Saudi monarchy and the despots ruling the Persian Gulf states. ***Down with the blockade of Gaza! All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem! Down with U.S. aid to Israel, Egypt!***

Reuters

AP

**Left: Israeli prime minister Netanyahu with Barack Obama at UN, September 21. Right: Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas addressing UN General Assembly, September 23.**

### For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

At the heart of the Palestinians' oppression is the fact that both the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian peoples claim the same slice of land in the Near East. Figures on the Zionist right, such as Netanyahu's foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, have long raised the rallying cry of "transfer"—i.e., the forced expulsion of all Palestinian Arabs from the Occupied Territories, and perhaps from within Israel itself. This perspective goes back to the "founding fathers" of the Zionist state. The head of the Jewish Agency's Colonization Department, Joseph Weitz, wrote in 1940: "Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country.... And there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries; to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left" (quoted in introduction to Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* [1973]).

As has been repeatedly demonstrated in Israel/Palestine, the Balkans and Northern Ireland, under capitalism the only possible outcome to the conflict between geographically interpenetrated peoples is one nation on top with the other either expelled, subjugated or some combination thereof. To secure the national rights of the oppressed Palestinians without thereby denying the national existence of the Hebrew-speaking people, the Zionist garrison state must be shattered from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. As long as the national principle prevails, the oppression of the Palestinians, who are the weaker side, can only worsen. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East can the right of national self-determination of both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples and the many other minority peoples of the region be equitably realized.

In 1974, after Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) first came out for a "two-state" solution to Palestinian national oppression, we declared that at most it represented "a very partial and deformed expression of the Palestinian Arabs' right to self-determination" ("West Bank Mini-State No Solution," *WV* No. 57, 22 November 1974). Since the U.S.-sponsored 1993 Oslo accord between Israel's then-Labor Party government and the PLO, what has been on offer as an "independent" Palestine is a rump state consisting of the Gaza Strip and four isolated cantons in the West Bank. We warned at the time that far from offering even the most deformed expression of self-determination, Arafat's deal placed the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the Palestinians.

At best, the "two-state solution" being pushed by the imperialists, "left" Zionists and Arab nationalists would mean an impoverished Palestinian statelet under the stranglehold of the Zionist capitalist state and with no viable economy. Among other things, it would permanently consign the millions of Palestinian refugees to the camps in Lebanon, Jordan and elsewhere where they now languish or get them dumped into the impoverished mini-state.

AFP

**May 15: Palestinian police stop demonstrators on way to Jewish settlements in the West Bank city of Hebron on anniversary of 1948 founding of Israel.**

A "socialist" rendition of the "two-state solution" is provided by Peter Taaffe's fake-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers' International (CWI, represented by Socialist Alternative in the U.S.). The CWI's British mainstay, the Socialist Party (SP), declares that "a capitalist Palestine alongside a capitalist Israel would not end poverty and bring security for either state" and raises a call for "two socialist states in a socialist confederation of the region" (socialistparty.org.uk, 14 September). Yet the article nowhere mentioned the need for joint class struggle by the Arab and Hebrew-speaking workers, much less for Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. Thus the SP/CWI call for "socialist states" is just a social-democratic veneer to the perspective of a Palestinian mini-state ghetto.

In the concrete, the Taaffeites crassly capitulate to the Zionist rulers. The SP article fails to raise even the simple, unambiguous demands for defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist terror and for all Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories. As for the CWI's section in Israel, Tnua't Maavak Sozialisti (Socialist Struggle Movement), an article it produced on this summer's mass protests in Israel over the high cost of living maintained Zionist "unity" by avoiding any call to defend the Palestinians as well as any discussion of how to achieve Palestinian national rights. (The article is posted in English on the Web site of their U.S. comrades, SocialistAlternative.org, 9 August.)

Hailing the outpouring over skyrocketing housing prices and other necessities as a "magnet for almost all other social protests," the article remarks that "even the police and prison guards...participated in some of the protests." This is in line with the CWI's long history of perpetrating the lie that the cops, prison guards and other armed thugs of the capitalist state are "workers in uniform."

### For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution!

The massive protests in Israel this summer were perhaps the largest in the country's history. After years of government austerity and wage-gouging, Israel has one of the highest poverty rates of any industrialized country in the world. Like all capitalist societies, Israel is divided along class lines and beset by political fissures. The Ashkenazi (European-derived) elite lords it over the Sephardic (Near Eastern) Jewish population, many of whom live in conditions of poverty. The wealth gap between Israeli-born Jews and Israeli Arabs, who constitute some 20 percent of the population, is four to one.

The core of the protests, modeled on the petty-bourgeois "Indignados" ("the indignant") movements in Spain and Greece, was a tent city that sprang up in Tel Aviv on July 14. As the protest movement was getting under way, public sector doctors and railway workers were carrying out strikes. Early this month, six Arab-populated Israeli towns in the Negev were shut down for a day in protest against a government plan to drive 30,000 Bedouins from their homes and confiscate their land.

While the most prominent slogan in this summer's protests was "The people want social justice," the "J14 movement" leadership refused to address the country's most obvious injustice: the oppression of the Palestinians. The petty-bourgeois protest movement was firmly within the bounds of the Zionist ideology that binds Israeli working people to their capitalist exploiters. Indeed, the tent cities in Tel Aviv and elsewhere attracted their fair share of support from fascistic settlers. Danny Dayan, chairman of the Yesha Council, the main group representing settlers, met with a prominent leader of the protest movement to express his solidarity. Baruch Marzel, formerly the head of Kach, the (banned) fascist party founded by American ultra-Zionist Meir Kahane, likewise brought scores of supporters to the Tel Aviv encampment. The settlers have a program to address the high cost of housing: They demand that the government expand the West Bank settlements by forcibly expropriating ever more Palestinian land.

While largely avoiding any hint of solidarity with the Palestinians, many protesters sought to link this movement to what has been dubbed the Arab Spring. Demonstrators chanted, "Tahrir Square is here" and carried posters with the names of Netanyahu, ousted Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Syrian despot Bashar al-Assad, linking the three as common protest targets. The struggles of workers in Tunisia and Egypt played a critical role in the toppling of the despised regimes

# Letters...

*(continued from page 2)*

breathing in cigarette smoke. There are too many factors at play, from the presence of environmental pollutants to the difficulty of quantifying how much smoke actually has been inhaled. While it is true that Gio Batta Gori is in the hip pocket of Big Tobacco, his criticisms of the 2006 report that we cited in the article are unobjectionable—nor are they limited to friends of the tobacco industry in the medical community.

In addition, a lot of the studies over the years have failed to meet basic standards of "statistical significance." This term has nothing to do with the common usage of the word "significant" but rather is a measure of whether a study's results are due to pure chance. When evaluating the studies, it also should be kept in mind that correlation does not per se prove causality.

The wildly exaggerated and unscientific statements in the 2006 report do provide ample evidence of the ideological crusade at hand. For example, among its conclusions: "There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke." This makes a mockery of the most basic tenet of modern toxicology—"The dose makes the poison." It's as if there is no difference between exposure to radiation from a single X-ray and the fallout from a nuclear bomb. In the twisted minds of the Surgeon General and his army of moralistic fanatics, even ventilation is a curse, supposedly distributing smoke throughout a building rather than dissipating and removing it.

The materials publicizing the report also repeat another favorite canard of the prohibitionists: "Smoking is the single greatest avoidable cause of disease and death." What pure bourgeois propaganda! The capitalist ruling class denies health care to tens of millions, kills untold numbers in its imperialist wars of depredation, starves the impoverished masses and daily puts the life and limb of industrial workers at risk as it squeezes out its profits.

Commenting on the outdoor smoking ban in NYC, the *New England Journal of Medicine* (23 June) noted, "Since smokers are more likely to be poor and therefore dependent on free public spaces for enjoyment and recreation, refusing to allow them to smoke in those places poses potential problems of fairness." That's putting it far too mildly. There is a strong class and race bias to this puritanism, as Michael C. notes. While working people can no longer enjoy a smoke on the beach, in a park or while strolling along a pedestrian mall in the Big Apple and office employees huddle outside trying to sneak a puff, those with money light up freely inside "doorman and rope" nightclubs where a bottle of liquor can go for hundreds of dollars. Oozing ruling-class arrogance, Mayor Bloomberg, the Surgeon General and their ilk push a cause that has nothing to do with health and everything to do with the wholesale regimentation of the populace and a drive to increase workplace productivity. ■

there. But the "Arab Spring" points to the treacherous consequences of precisely the sort of trans-class coalition that is seen in the protests in Israel.

The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have been dominated by class-collaborationist coalitions ranging from viciously anti-woman Islamic fundamentalists to bourgeois liberals and reformist leftists. In the name of "national unity," the proletariat has remained politically submerged as a class. In Egypt, the same military that had been the backbone of the Mubarak regime is now openly the governmental power, arresting and torturing hundreds of leftists, worker militants and others. Women and Coptic Christians are increasingly besieged by reactionary fundamentalists and by the military regime itself, as seen in the horrific killing of two dozen Coptic protesters by security forces in Cairo on October 9.

As we wrote at the beginning of the North African uprisings: "What is urgently posed in Egypt today is that the powerful proletariat—the only class with the social power to overturn the brutal and decrepit capitalist order—emerge as the leader of all the oppressed masses" ("Egypt: Mass Upheaval Challenges Dictatorship," *WV* No. 973, 4 February). Our article stressed: "As in Tunisia, what is necessary in Egypt is the forging of a revolutionary party that can lead the fight for a workers and peasants government."

## Bankruptcy of Palestinian Nationalism

The sheikhs, kings and military rulers of the Near East and North Africa are no less the enemies of the region's oppressed, including the Palestinians, than Israel's Zionist rulers. This is graphically confirmed by the history of the PLO which, following its founding in 1964, initially looked to the Arab bourgeoisies as allies against Israel. The result of this suicidal strategy was seen in the 1970 "Black September" massacre of more than 10,000 Palestinian fighters by the Jordanian monarchy and the tens of thousands more killed later in Lebanon.

By the early 1990s, the PLO's reliance on the Arab regimes was supplanted by direct appeals to the imperialists, particularly the United States. After capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92, removing the main military and political counterweight to U.S. imperialism, the PLO was deprived of crucial diplomatic and financial support. This set the stage for the 1993 Oslo accords, under which the Palestinian nationalist leaders became enforcers for the Zionist occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The Palestinian nationalists' view that the Zionist rulers are more reactionary than their imperialist patrons is shared by those in the U.S., Britain and elsewhere who call for "boycotts, disinvestment and sanctions" (BDS) against Israel. At bottom, the divestment campaign looks to employ moral suasion to pressure campus administrations, corporations and ultimately the imperialist rulers, centrally Washington, to break ties to Israel and implement a more benevolent policy toward the Palestinians.

The idea that the U.S. capitalist ruling class could be pressured into serving as a force for good in the world is obscene. From its emergence as an imperialist power in the late 19th century, the U.S. has left a grisly trail of carnage around the globe—from its murderous "pacification" of the Philippines after seizing those islands in the 1898 Spanish-American War to the Korean and Vietnam Wars and the current ravaging of Afghanistan. But for reformists like the International Socialist Organization and Party for Socialism and Liberation in the U.S., their backing of the BDS movement is but one facet of an entire program based on the illusory quest to pressure the profit-driven, blood-soaked imperialist rulers and their state to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed.

## Reforge the Fourth International!

Most of the left internationally offers nothing more than a "socialist" gloss on the treacherous nationalist program that has led the Palestinian masses into ever-deeper misery. A case in point in Israel is the Internationalist Socialist League (ISL), which is affiliated with the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) in the U.S. An undated statement last spring by ISL leader Yossi Schwartz declared (lrp-cofi.org):

> "Since all Israel is stolen land, history has posed the question as follows: either the Israelis have the right to rule Palestine and not allow the right of self-determination of the Palestinians; or the Palestinians have the right of self-determination, which negates the right of self-determination of the Israeli Jews on Palestinian lands."

In a later statement addressed to Israeli protesters this summer, the ISL promised that "Jews who would struggle alongside the Palestinians in a revolutionary struggle, will also become a part of the ruling class—the workers and the poor, Palestinians and Jews alike" (the-isleague.com).

But the Hebrew workers will never be broken from Zionism and won to the need for common class struggle with the Palestinian Arab toilers against the Israeli capitalist rulers if their own right to a national existence is denied. Unlike the Palestinian nationalists, the anti-Semitic fundamentalists like Hamas and indeed the Zionists themselves, we do not equate the Zionist state with the Hebrew-speaking people. Nor do we accept the line of the ISL, LRP and much of the left that only the oppressed nations are endowed with valid national rights.

AFP

**Zionist Haganah militiamen force Palestinians from their homes in Haifa during mass expulsions of 1948.**

Reuters

**August 6: A quarter million protested in Tel Aviv against Israel's high cost of living.**

In championing the defense of the Palestinians against Zionist terror, Marxists aim not to pit nation against nation but to point the way to the revolutionary mobilization of the proletariat, in Israel and the entire region. Only through the overthrow of the Israeli bourgeoisie and also the Jordanian monarchy, the Syrian regime and the other Arab ruling classes can the right of self-determination for both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples, as well as the many other peoples of the region, be equitably realized. There can be no revolutionary perspective in the Near East without the inclusion of the proletariat of Israel, the most technologically advanced and militarily powerful country in the region. We have no illusions that this will be an easy task; it will likely take some historic event, like the victory of social revolution in another country in the Near East extending a hand of proletarian internationalism to the Israeli working class, to jolt the Hebrew proletariat from its ties with the Zionist rulers.

What is necessary is to build revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East that fight against all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism and put forward the perspective of international proletarian revolution, crucially including the U.S. and other imperialist centers. The greatest historical example of such a perspective is that provided by the 1917 Russian Revolution, which, despite its later bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin, brought unparalleled and all-sided social development and national collaboration to the Caucasus and other oppressed regions of the former tsarist empire. Likewise, in the Balkans, long a seething cauldron of interethnic bloodshed, the social revolution led by Tito in Yugoslavia laid the foundation for almost 50 years of national peace and social development. The restoration of capitalism in both the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia unleashed the old nationalist hatreds and murderous "ethnic cleansing" anew, aided and abetted by the imperialist powers.

In the struggle to forge a revolutionary workers party in Israel/Palestine, Marxists can take inspiration from the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the small Palestinian Trotskyist group that upheld the position of communist internationalism in the 1948 War between Israel and the Arab states (see *WV* No. 981, 27 May). While recognizing the right of both the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian Arab peoples to self-determination, the RCL resolutely opposed the imperialist-imposed partition and took a position of revolutionary defeatism toward both sides in the war, concluding in an editorial in its Hebrew organ *Kol Ham'amad* (*Voice of the Class*):

> "Jewish workers! Get rid of the Zionist provocateurs who tell you to sacrifice yourself on the altar of the Hebrew state.
>
> "Arab worker and fellah! Get rid of the chauvinist provocateurs who are getting you into a mess of blood for their own sake and pocket.
>
> "*Workers of the two peaples, unite in a cammon frant against imperialism and its agents!*" ■

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# Wall Street...

*(continued from page 12)*

new tax rate for millionaires (the so-called "Buffett Rule") in exchange for Democrats' support to more cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. In reality, this token "tax the rich" scheme is meant to be sugarcoating on another round of anti-working-class austerity.

Obama and the Democrats want to appear as if they care about "the little guy," but in reality Obama championed the same austerity agenda as the Republicans all summer long, pushing for massive budget cuts. The Democrats, like the Republicans, are a political party of the capitalist class. As one Verizon striker put it, "The Democrats are doing the job of the Republicans, only with a smile."

Economic crises, booms and busts, are nothing new—they are endemic to the capitalist mode of production. A key contradiction that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels identified is that under capitalism production is socialized. But the means of production remain the private property of a few, who appropriate the wealth that is produced by workers' collective labor. Those who own the means of production—the factories, mines, railroads, banks—constitute the capitalist class, also known as the bourgeoisie. Those who subsist only on their labor power—their mental and physical ability to work—constitute the working class, the proletarians. Between these two classes lies a variety of merchants, independent professionals and others known as the petty bourgeoisie. But the main, decisive classes are the capitalist class and the working class.

Consciously or not, labor seeks to resist exploitation. It comes into constant conflict with the uncontrollable drive of capitalist production, which is the drive for the accumulation of more and more capital, and the production of more and more profit. This is the basis for class struggle—the irreconcilable class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

## The Imperialist Epoch

V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, described how capitalism in the late 19th century reached its highest stage—imperialism. He described how the means of production came to be monopolized by fewer and bigger conglomerates with ever-growing needs for investment funds and other financing, leading to the dominance of finance capital, centrally the giant banks. As the capitalists in the advanced industrial countries strove for newer markets to exploit, they carried out wars to redivide the world and secure spheres of exploitation in less-developed countries. In their competition for world domination, the imperialist powers engulfed people around the world in the barbarism of World Wars I and II and waged countless bloody wars in colonial and semicolonial countries.

The way out of the endless cycle of capitalist economic crises and imperialist wars was shown by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, when workers took power in their own hands, expropriating the bourgeoisie and establishing the Soviet workers state. It is high time that working people, who create the wealth in this society, run this society! We need an all new ruling class—the workers! Fight, don't starve! Labor must rule!

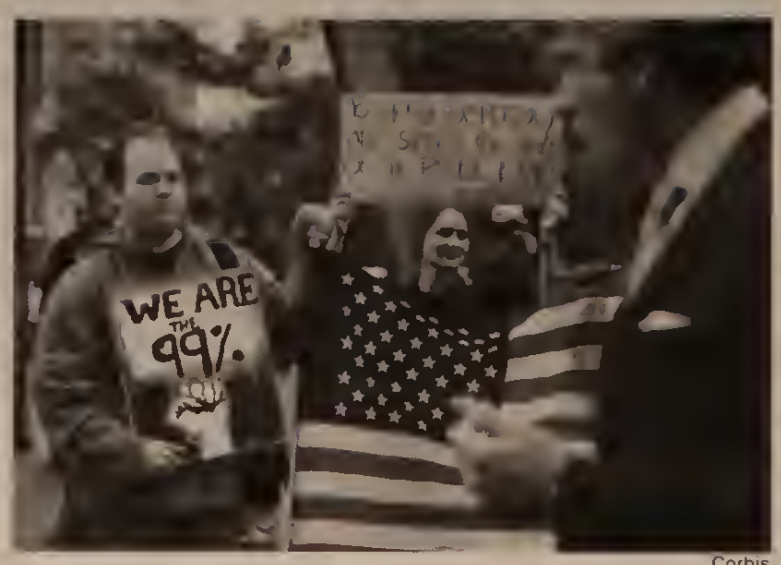
In a climate conditioned by the imperialists' proclamations that the destruction of the Soviet Union proved Marxism to be a "failed experiment," the prospect of proletarian socialist revolution might appear implausible. But the collectivized economy in the Soviet Union worked! Despite its isolation in a world dominated by imperialism, the Soviet Union, arising from deep backwardness and the destruction of world war, civil war and imperialist intervention, became an industrial and military powerhouse, even under Stalinist bureaucratic misrule.

When the capitalist world was in the midst of the Great Depression, the Soviet Union actually increased its industrial output. As Leon Trotsky pointed out in *The Revolution Betrayed* in 1936:

> "Even if the Soviet Union, as a result of internal difficulties, external blows and the mistakes of its leadership, were to collapse—which we firmly hope will not happen—there would remain as an earnest of the future this indestructible fact, that thanks solely to a proletarian revolution a backward country has achieved in less than ten years successes unexampled in history."

Now, two decades after counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state, many in Russia long for the days when they were guaranteed a job, education, housing, health care and vacations, regretting that they were taken in by the myth of capitalist "democracy." What undermined the collectivized economy, and ultimately laid the basis for the destruction of the Soviet Union itself, was the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which robbed the workers of their political power and vainly sought to appease the imperialists by selling out workers struggles in other countries.

Today, the deep economic crisis in the capitalist countries contrasts sharply with the situation in China, where the industries central to production are collectivized. Beijing has massively channeled investment into developing infrastructure and productive capacity. However, China's Stalinist regime also undermines the social gains of the 1949 Revolution by conciliating imperialism and promoting "market reforms" that strengthen internal counterrevolutionary forces. In its "partnership" with world capital, the Beijing bureaucracy is subsidizing American imperialism through its huge investment in U.S. treasury bonds, which, among other things, are used to finance the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for proletarian political revolution to replace the Stalinist bureaucrats with a revolutionary internationalist leadership and a regime of workers democracy.

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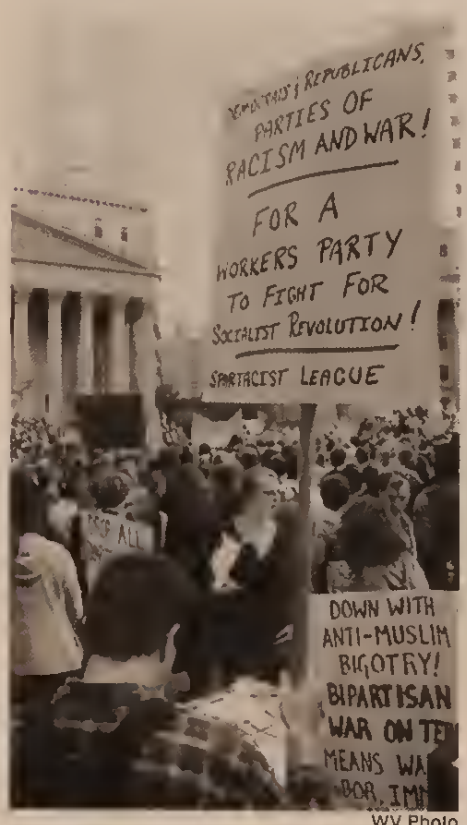
**Left: "Occupy Wall Street" protesters carry American flag, September 19. Right: U.S. occupation forces in Iraq brutalize residents of Falluja, November 2004. American flag is emblem of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism.**




WV Photo

**Foley Square, October 5.**

## From Spain's Indignados...

I want to talk a bit about Europe and in particular Spain, where I visited this past summer. Along with the wild roller-coaster ride of the stock market, Europe has been in the news just about every day with the imperialist rulers desperately trying to keep the economies afloat. In Europe, the financial crisis has sharply accentuated the contradictions inherent in the European Union (EU), an unstable consortium of rival capitalist states, some richer, some poorer. At the heart of the EU's contradictions is the fact that the maintenance of a common currency requires a common state power. That is simply not possible under capitalism. As proletarian internationalists, we have always opposed the EU as an imperialist trade bloc. We say that only the conquest of state power by the working class can lay the basis for a *socialist* United States of Europe and a rationally planned economy.

In Spain, youth unemployment is around 45 percent. Factories are closing, hospitals are cutting back, and evictions during just three months of this year numbered over 15,000, more than 150 a day. When I was in Spain I got to discuss with some of the "Indignados" ("the indignant") at their encampment in Puerta del Sol, the central square in Madrid. The Spanish Indignados are essentially a petty-bourgeois movement that arose in response to the austerity measures being enforced by the social-democratic Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) before its huge defeat in the municipal and regional elections in May. The PSOE in power has carried out a relentless capitalist austerity drive.

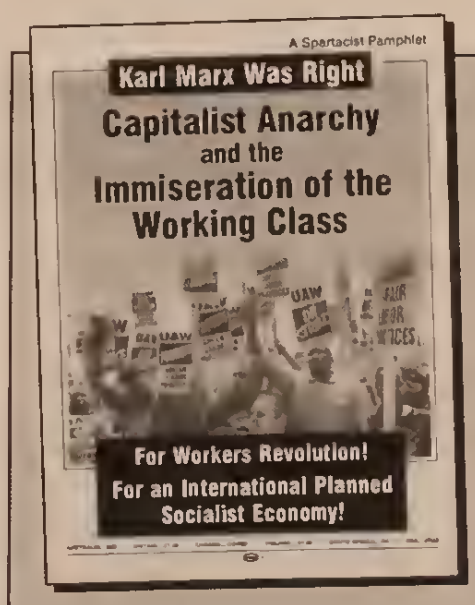
Those who started the Indignados movement were inspired by the best-selling book *Indignez-vous!* (Be Indignant!) by Stéphane Hessel, a French anti-communist bourgeois ideologue. They were also inspired by the protests in Egypt and Iceland. They occupied squares in major cities throughout Spain, numbering in the tens of thousands, mostly youth, calling on people to "stand up against indifference in a peaceful uprising."

Their main organizers, around a group called Real Democracy Now, put out a manifesto calling for an end to corruption and an end to the dictatorship of the markets, "real democracy." But what is democracy in a class-divided society? Under capitalism, it is democracy for the ruling class, those wealthy few who own the means of production and carry out laws to defend their private property. There are no laws that will establish equality between the capitalists and the working class. The capitalists have a state apparatus, armed bodies of men (cops, courts, prisons) to keep the bourgeoisie in power and repress *any* challenge to their rule.

So how do the Indignados propose to change society? By endless protests and encampments? You can be indignant all you want, but to really make a change you have to ally with the social power of the working class, the only class that has the power to stop production and has the historic interest to overthrow capitalism. But the leadership of the Indignados movement is anti-union and therefore anti-working-class, because unions are the basic defense organizations of the working class. In Spain early on, the Indignados assemblies would not allow any union or political organization to join with them, "in order to guarantee the political neutrality of this citizens' movement"! Their so-called "non-political" stance is actually very political—in the direction of anti-communism. This is shown by their exclusion of left groups from speaking at assemblies and attempts to censor left groups from distributing their literature.

Even their anti-leadership emphasis on "consensus" decision-making is undemocratic. Instead of using majority votes to make decisions, people are supposed to debate endlessly until they all agree. Then, of course, a non-elected clique usually makes the decisions in the background.

While the Indignados leadership pushes anti-union politics, it seems that many of the youth don't necessarily buy into it. One example is that there have been large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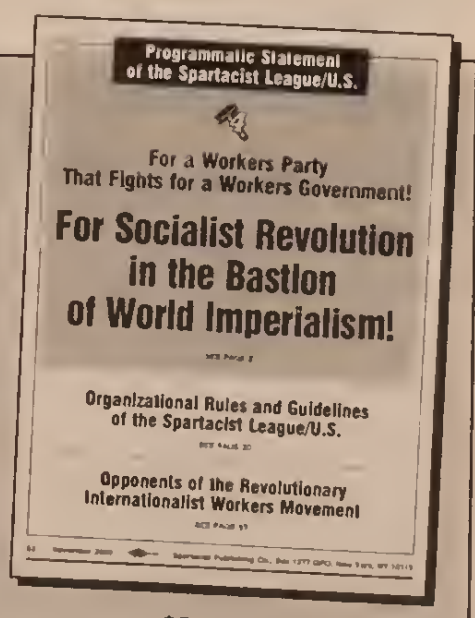


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# NYPD...

*(continued from page 12)*

chanting, "Police, join us! They want your pensions, too!"

The cops are the hired guns of the capitalist class, "earning" their pay (and sweet retirement) by breaking strikes and terrorizing the ghettos and barrios to protect the interests of Wall Street. As revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky put it, "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker" (*What Next?*, January 1932). The pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats betray the interests of workers by organizing cops and security guards into the unions.

The nature of the police as guard dogs of capital is seen in any outbreak of class struggle. To punish the NYC Transport Workers Union for its 2005 strike, which for three days all but shut down the financial center of U.S. imperialism, the police dragged the union president off to jail. In the current vital struggle against union-busting in Longview, Washington, two International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 21 officials sought to aid a 57-year-old grandmother whose rotator cuff was torn by the cops. The Local 21 leaders were hurled to the ground and cuffed, their eyes directly and repeatedly maced. Now they're charged with assaulting the police! (See "Defend Longview ILWU Against Bosses' Cops and Courts!" *WV* No. 987, 30 September.)

Xanthos/Daily News

**NYPD business as usual: Cops pepper-spray, arrest protesters marching to Wall Street on October 5.**

Police violence is systematically employed in enforcing black oppression, a cornerstone of American capitalism. Just one day after the arrests on the Brooklyn Bridge, police fired multiple rounds into 57-year-old Yvonne McNeal, killing the black homeless woman in front of the shelter where she lived. A protest statement by Queers for Economic Justice (QEJ) noted: "When police targeted largely white Occupy Wall Street protesters, they used pepper spray. When faced with a vulnerable woman of color, they chose to use lethal force as their first option." McNeal was affiliated with QEJ, which marched on Wall Street in her honor.

The capitalist class gives the police a license to kill, and they exercise that license with impunity in New York City as elsewhere. Amadou Diallo was shot dead in the Bronx in 1999 by cops who fired 41 bullets into him; Sean Bell died in Queens in a hail of 50 NYPD bullets in 2006. In 2010, Luis Soto was gunned down when cops emptied their semiautomatics into a crowd of hundreds at a Harlem block party.

In a speech that polarized the Occupy Wall Street crowd on October 8, a member of the Spartacus Youth Club fought against deadly illusions in the police, declaring: "Cops defend the capitalist system. Blue shirt, white shirt, a cop is a cop! They are not workers!" ■

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teachers strikes in Madrid recently, and some Indignados have put out a statement in support.

Many of these youth hate the effects of capitalism but do not see socialism as an alternative. The whole "death of communism" ideology pushed by the bourgeoisie following the fall of the Soviet Union is reflected in such low-level protest movements. This is also a reflection of the betrayals of the Social Democracy and the Communist parties, which have engaged in decades of class-collaboration—the Spanish labor union bureaucrats work hand in hand with the Socialist Party government! We fight to win youth over to the side of the working class, to the program of international socialist revolution, and to the understanding that you need a Bolshevik vanguard party to accomplish this.

### ...To "Occupy Wall Street"

The new Occupy Wall Street encampment, which has been gaining steam around the country, is in solidarity with the Spanish Indignados, raising similar demands against corporate greed and for a "leaderless resistance movement." As one columnist put it, it's like a "festival of frustrations" and people are plenty mad. They also look for inspiration from the "Egyptian Spring." But look at what has happened in Egypt—the workers continue to get screwed under a renewed military dictatorship. What's needed is not endless protests and occupations of squares but workers to power!

For many of the youth in the encampment, this is their first protest. Many are pro-union, but they view the working class as just another base of support for their all-inclusive "movement." We've been intervening into the Occupy Wall Street protests, distributing lots of *Workers Vanguard*, looking to win over those who are open to a Marxist perspective of international socialist revolution.

Many of you have seen the video of the Wall Street protesters getting viciously attacked by the NYPD during a march to Union Square, where 80 people got arrested. The videos show several young women being corralled inside a movable police pen and pepper-sprayed by cops. Others were kicked, bruised and thrown over barricades by the police. And then last weekend 700 were arrested when the police trapped them on a march over the Brooklyn Bridge. According to a recent *New York Times* article, the NYPD is geared up to deal with "unrest."

Many of the protesters are saying that the problem with the cops is that they were "unprofessional." But these cops are as "professional" as they come! They are precisely carrying out their "profession" as the capitalist state's armed bodies of men. There are massive illusions that "the cops are workers, too," with slogans like "NYPD is a layoff away from joining us" and "The 99 percent includes cops." No, the cops are not a part of the working class—they have a special role to play as part of the capitalist state apparatus. We say cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

What we are seeing in the Occupy Wall Street protest is lowest-common-denominator politics, which does not at all challenge the rule of the bourgeoisie. An example of this was seen in the attempt to create a General Assembly declaration: Somebody objected to using the phrase "redistribution of wealth" because it sounded "dangerously similar to theft"! So it was decided, via consensus, to remove this phrase altogether. If you look at their final declaration posted on the Web, it does not even oppose capitalism, it just raises the same appeals for classless "democracy." This is not new. A lot of these same themes were put forward during the anti-globalization protests of the late 1990s, here and in Europe, which did not go anywhere.

Many of the slogans raised, like "We are the 99 percent," are totally compatible with the Democratic Party's line. In fact, the Democrats are working to get on top of these protests as a way of invigorating Obama's campaign for the next election and to counter the Tea Party. Not only has Obama empathized with the protests, but yesterday's *Wall Street Journal* reported that even Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner and Ben Bernanke have expressed sympathy! You also have celebrities like Michael Moore and Susan Sarandon there—one of the first things she asked was if people were registered to vote. And there are the left-talking Democrats like Charles Barron, all looking to corral youth toward the Democratic Party.

As I mentioned at the start, several unions have called for joining the Occupy Wall Street protests. A recent article noted, "The decision by organized labor to join the demonstrations has given them an extra jolt of numbers and credibility, since unions have historically played an important, but waning, role in mobilizing voters on the left" (*New York Times*, 6 October). The labor bureaucrats' program is not about class struggle. It's about pressuring the Democratic Party to go a little easier on their membership during a period of union-busting austerity.

Brock Lile

**Longview, Washington: ILWU Local 21 members and supporters face off against cops on September 7 in fight to defeat union-busting.**

One of the more vocal unions in support of the protests has been the New York City Transport Workers Union (TWU). Like other unions, the TWU is under heavy attack by the bosses. TWU members showed *real* social power when they went on strike in December 2005, defying the state Taylor Law banning public workers strikes. But the workers were stabbed in the back by the leaders of other NYC unions and the TWU International, and in the end were sold out by their own local union misleaders.

TWU bureaucrats and the rest of the AFL-CIO officialdom are pushing impotent "tax the rich" schemes along with reformist left groups like the International Socialist Organization, the Workers World Party and the Party for Socialism and Liberation. These "tax the rich" demands are tailor-made to fit in with the current Obama administration and Democratic Party platform. The corporations and banks are sitting on mountains of cash, but you aren't going to get your hands on it by appealing to the tax authority of the capitalist state, whose purpose is to guarantee and defend the interests of the bourgeoisie.

This past spring, tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters (including students) came out to occupy the Wisconsin State Capitol to protest Republican governor Scott Walker's union-busting law tearing up collective bargaining for public workers unions. But the bureaucratic misleaders of the AFL-CIO worked overtime to squelch any move toward actually using labor's strike weapon. Instead they channeled the anger of the ranks into support for the Democratic Party with a petition to recall Walker and a number of Republican state legislators, which failed miserably. Wisconsin public employee unions have been dealt a real defeat.

Within the labor movement, the proletariat is saddled with a pro-capitalist union bureaucracy that promotes the lie that the interests of labor and capital are compatible. They tie working people and the oppressed to the capitalist system, especially through support to the Democratic Party. The trade-union misleaders poured a whopping $450 million into the 2008 elections, backing capitalist politicians like Obama as "friends of labor."

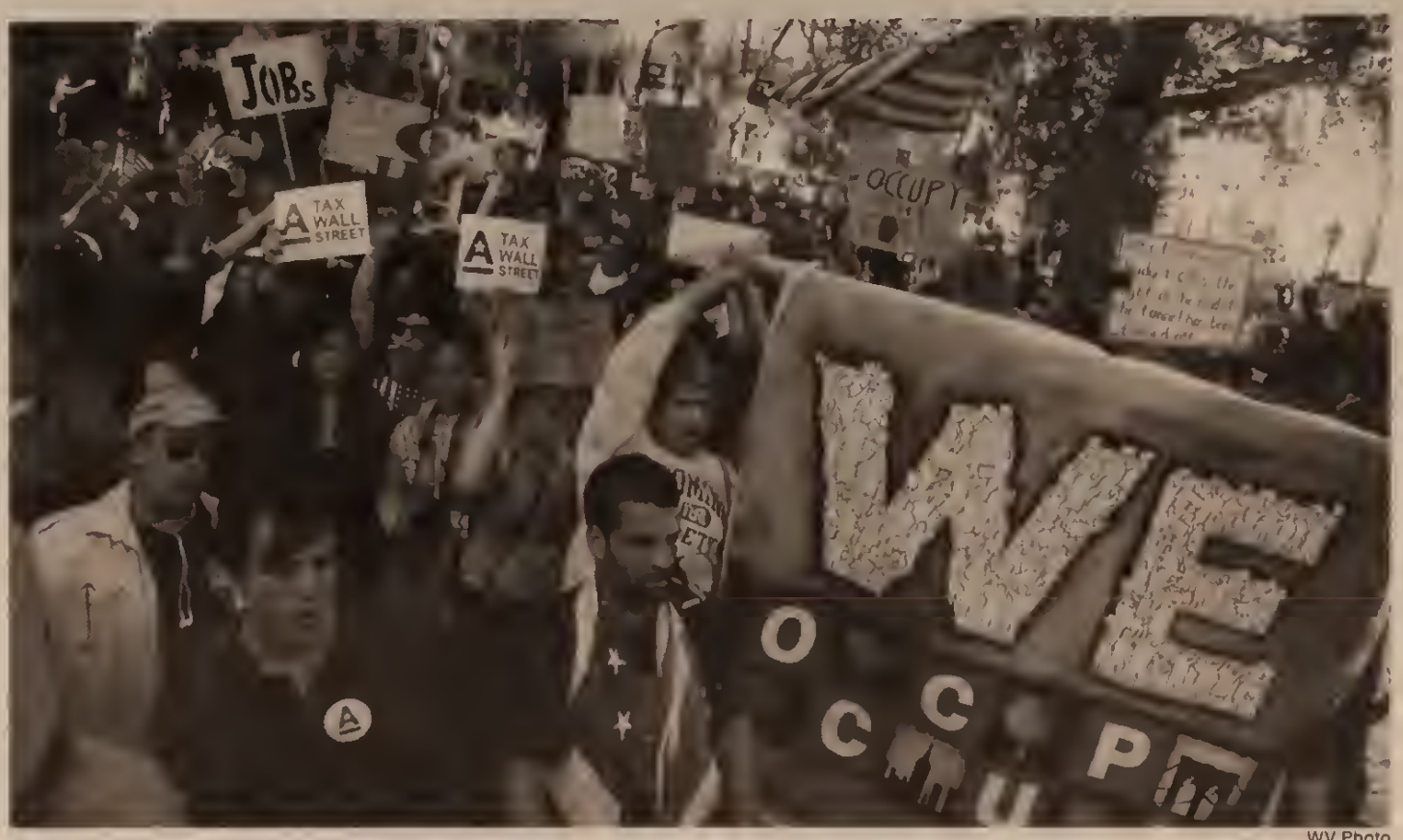
It is absolutely necessary to forge a new leadership of the unions to mobilize labor in struggle for its class interests, to fight against all forms of discrimination and for full citizenship rights for immigrants. A strategic question for the American workers revolution is the fight against black oppression, which is rooted in the very foundation of capitalism in the U.S. If the unions are to fight for their very existence, they must take up the defense of the ghetto and barrio poor by fighting for jobs, quality housing, education, health care and more.

The decades of betrayals by the labor bureaucracy have encouraged the U.S. rulers in the arrogant belief that they can get away with doing anything to the working class, the poor and most everyone else without provoking any social struggle. But the rulers and their labor lieutenants cannot eliminate the class struggle. The same conditions that grind down the workers can and will propel them into battle against the capitalist class enemy. Right now International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Washington, is in a battle for its life, fighting against the union-busting of the EGT multinational conglomerate. They have been facing court injunctions, arrests and police assaults, including pepper spray and cops in full riot gear, in a fight to defend their union.

Renewed labor battles will lay the basis for reviving and extending the unions, with a new, class-struggle leadership coming to the fore. It is crucial that we build a revolutionary vanguard party that will bring the critical element of consciousness to the proletariat, to transform it from a class in itself to a class for itself, fighting to do away with this entire system of wage slavery. Join us in the fight for a socialist future for humanity! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

# "Occupy Wall Street": Rebels for Liberal Reform




WV Photo

October 5: "Occupy Wall Street" demonstration in downtown Manhattan's Foley Square.

# For Workers Revolution to Expropriate the Capitalist Class!

*Below we print excerpts from an October 8 forum by Spartacist League spokesman Irene Gardner in Oakland.*

This past Wednesday my comrades and I were at the mass demonstration in downtown Manhattan with the Occupy Wall Street protesters, roughly 700 of whom were arrested by the NYPD at a march over the Brooklyn Bridge a few days earlier. I think the scale and popularity of these protests have surprised the New York City ruling class somewhat. It's another indication of how much anger is out there.

Each day we open up the paper and discover another set of horrible statistics about the effects of the capitalist crisis on poor and working people. The reality is a lot worse than the numbers. Back in 2008, the con men on Wall Street, whose financial swindles were central to the economic collapse, were bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars. But the working class, black people, Latinos and the growing mass of the poor have been made to foot the bill, losing jobs, homes, pensions and just about anything else that makes life livable.

Today, one in six people of working age in the U.S. are unemployed, with long-term unemployment the highest since the Great Depression. The Census Bureau now reports that 46.2 million in the U.S. live under the poverty line, and of those, 2.6 million fell into poverty just in the last year alone. Those who still have a job are being squeezed to work harder, faster and longer for lower pay. And there are plenty of people who have given up even looking for a job altogether. A new census report also shows that one in five New Yorkers now live in poverty, the highest level in a decade. Another astounding figure: in New York City the number of homeless students in public schools has *quadrupled* since 2008, to almost 43,000 as of last October.

Meanwhile, during the past two years, corporate profits have broken all historic records. The government's "welfare for the rich" schemes have boosted financial speculation, artificially driving up the price of stocks, while the manufacturing and productive capacity of the U.S. has dropped significantly. And now we're in a global financial crisis with Europe ready to implode.

Even billionaire New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg mentioned that riots could happen if job prospects don't improve. It is the fear that the masses might revolt that concerns union-hating Bloomberg and other multibillionaires like Warren Buffett. President Obama has now been pushing a

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## Drop All the Charges!

# Know Your Enemy: NYPD Arrests Hundreds

The hundreds of "Occupy Wall Street" protesters trapped and arrested on the roadway of the Brooklyn Bridge on October 1 received a bitter lesson on the role of the police and the nature of the capitalist state, as did the young women whose pepper-spraying at pointblank range on September 24 drew international attention to the protests. If this was a first-time experience for many of the demonstrators, the arrest of black protester Hero Vincent called to mind the brutal treatment meted out to ghetto youth every day by the NYPD. In an interview with *Democracy Now*, Vincent recounted how four laughing officers yelled, "Stop resisting arrest" while kicking him in the stomach as he lay helpless on the ground. He now faces a trumped-up felony charge of assaulting a police officer. We demand: *Drop all charges against the anti-Wall Street protesters!*

Many protesters have bought the liberal organizers' line that the "white shirt" commanders are the problem, while the "blue shirt" cops are themselves victims of Wall Street. Reinforcing this myth is the illusion that the cops who are beating and arresting protesters are just a few bad apples. In response to the September 24 police assault, an occupywallst.org statement calling for a march to NYPD headquarters bleated: "Let us also be clear that, when approached as individuals, members of the NYPD have expressed solidarity with our cause. It has been inspiring to receive this support." On an October 5 march through Lower Manhattan, organizers led demonstrators in

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 989

28 October 2011


# Imperialist Butchers Gloat over Qaddafi Lynching

In a surprise visit to Tripoli on October 18, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed her hope that former Libyan ruler Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi "can be captured or killed soon." Two days later, gruesome video images of the lynching of Qaddafi by NATO's hirelings were played around the world. The imperialist rulers, whose forces had been pummeling Libya in unrelenting bombing raids for months, reveled in the murder of Qaddafi and one of his sons as a victory for "democracy."

Against a backdrop of pictures of Qaddafi—captured but still alive—after he was bloodied and beaten by the Libyan rebel forces, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Barack Obama, intoned: "The dark shadow of tyranny has been lifted." He was echoed by British prime minister David Cameron, who declared that Qaddafi's murder heralded

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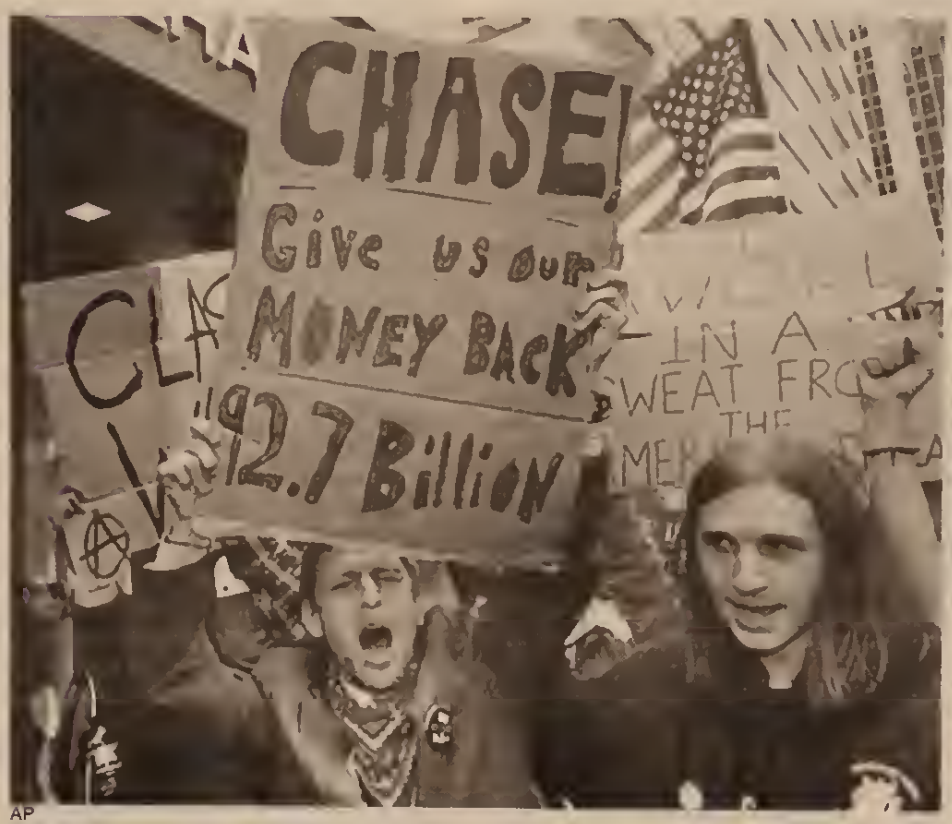
## Democrats, Republicans: Parties of Capital

# "Occupy Wall Street": Capitalist Crisis Sparks Populist Protests




AP

Tyska/San Jose Mercury News

**Left: Occupy Wall Street protesters marching in New York City, October 15. Above: Cops arrest protester as they tear down Occupy Oakland tent city, October 25.**

OCTOBER 25—An amorphous group of protesters, ranging from student youth and jobless workers to veteran liberal activists, has now been camping out in Lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park under the banner of "Occupy Wall Street" (OWS) for over a month. With its rallies and marches in New York City drawing from a few hundred to over 10,000 people, OWS has tapped into widespread anger over corporate profit-gouging, mass unemployment and stark economic inequalities.

Similar occupations have spread to Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and many other cities and towns across the country, even as police have repeatedly attacked and arrested large numbers of protesters. On October 15, hundreds of thousands turned out across Europe and elsewhere for solidarity demonstrations with OWS, which itself has drawn inspiration from the "Indignados" (indignant ones) in Spain and Greece. Today, hundreds of riot-equipped cops wielding flash grenades, tear gas and billy clubs surrounded the "Occupy Oakland" tent city at Frank Ogawa Plaza in the early morning hours. With helicopters hovering overhead shining a spotlight on the scene, the cops moved in, ripping apart the encampment and arresting more than 75 people. ***Drop all charges against the protesters, from Oakland to NYC!***

The OWS protests have touched a real nerve in large sections of the population three years into the deep, ongoing economic crisis. Homeless shelters are filled to capacity. College students and recent graduates are choking under a mountain of debt, facing an increasingly bleak future. Many workers who have managed to hold on to their jobs have been made to swallow lower wages, with their benefits shredded and their pensions looted by the bosses and bankers. With the trade unions taking it on the chin, many workers have greeted the OWS protests as an outlet for their own anger. Meanwhile, the bulk of the capitalist ruling class has made out like bandits, with the Obama White House, following George W. Bush, showering hundreds of billions in bailouts onto the banks and auto companies. Fed up with government lies, foreign wars, the ban on marijuana and worsening unemployment, one protester in Phoenix said, "All the world's problems run downhill, and I'm at the bottom."

Many young occupiers are participating in their first political protest, and most enthusiastically embrace its democratic pretensions and "grassroots" origins, seeing the potential to do something, *anything* about what's happening to themselves and so many others. While the OWS organizers pride themselves on not having a clear political agenda, affiliation

*continued on page 8*

## For Workers Revolution to Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!

# On "Occupy Wall Street"

New Orleans
October 2, 2011

Dear Mr. Bishop:

I am a subscriber to your publication Workers Vanguard. The front page article titled "We Need An All New Ruling Class—The Workers" [*WV* No. 985, 2 September] is perhaps more relevant now than ever before. This was an excellent article! Neither of the two primary political parties that dominate American politics adequately represents my interests, nor those of the ordinary working folks of this nation. I would like to propose a non-violent means to address the problem.

I have devoted much thought to how to get the attention of wall street and the 1% of the folks who have 90% of the wealth. There is a way it can be done without any violence whatsoever. The people have an enormous power in numbers. If a large majority of this nation's wage earners were to simply choose not to go to work, until they get a bigger piece of the pie, the likes of wall street will be crippled. There will be no law clerks working to foreclose on our houses and evict us from our apartments. Doing so will mean a significant sacrifice on the part of working people. But, this sacrifice must occur to change the balance of power. The people have this capability, and this right, only if they exercise it! Until the people have the guts to make this very short-term sacrifice, nothing will change. The singular objective of the Occupy Wall Street movement should be to bring the big corporations that usurp our voting power to their knees by denying them a labor source.

I challenge you to make this your next issues lead article along with one on Occupy Wall Street.

Kindest regards,
Russell A.

***WV* Replies:**

We thank Russell for his letter and direct him and other readers to our front-page article on the "Occupy Wall Street" protests in this issue. As we lay out there, the capitalist class has at its disposal a state apparatus of organized violence—the cops, courts and prisons—to repress struggle against its domination. The liberal doctrine of "nonviolence" obscures the fact that the capitalists will stop at nothing to protect their profits.

As we have argued while intervening in these protests, an equitable redistribution of wealth (so that the workers get a "bigger piece of the pie") is not possible within the capitalist system. Bringing down Wall Street will not come about through atomized individuals making their own "sacrifice," but through workers revolution. It is not a question of changing the balance of power between Wall Street and the "people," but of changing the class in power from the capitalists—the parasitic owners of the banks and industrial enterprises—to the proletariat, the class whose labor is the source of the capitalists' profits. A workers revolution would expropriate the banks and factories and lay the basis for abolishing the system of wage slavery altogether. To do this requires the building of a revolutionary party that imbues the working class with the consciousness of its historic mission to overthrow capitalist rule and reorganize society on a socialist basis. ■

# Nuclear Power and Capitalism

Oakland, California
15 August 2011

To the Editors
Dear Comrades,

While I agree that the working class in power must remake the world, that Green Party reformism is a dead end, and that an exclusive focus on ending nukes is also reformist, I cannot understand your drive to promote a dangerous and dying capitalist industry such as nuclear power ("Greens' Anti-Nuclear Hysteria Amnesties Capitalism," WV 983, 08 July 2011).

You say that the struggle must be for the expropriation of energy concerns, and that this must be "part of the fight for a socialist revolution to establish an internationally planned economy under the control of workers councils." Good. But then you say, "Only then, based on an international division of labor, will it be possible to consider whether it is really necessary to construct nuclear power plants in thickly settled earthquake zones like Japan." H-m-m, that sounds like damning with faint praise. Why withhold condemnation of such capitalist crimes?

Trotskyists seek to breathe revolutionary life into the class struggle with the Transitional Program, saying: here's what the revolutionaries want to do with the world to address the current needs of the masses. But the SL says, essentially, just put us in power, and then everything will be sorted out. Periodically, you mention some general slogans, such as "public works." But you don't say what sort of public works for today, and it sounds like you're just reading an old quote.

Aside from capitalism itself, climate change is the most devastating threat humanity has ever faced. It represents the ultimate in the rift between man and nature, of which Marx and Engels spoke. The working class needs to know: how will the revolutionaries deal with this? Of course we're for technology, but we don't just take over capitalist industry as is: we transform the entire economy into an engine for real human needs, which now must include: saving the planet. Which technologies will serve that end best?

Many scientists now say that an economy based entirely on renewable technology is possible. Is the SL just not paying attention?

Do you support the license extensions the capitalists demand for outdated nuclear plants which are becoming increasingly dangerous, or oppose them on safety grounds? If the latter, where do revolutionaries go next? We know what the capitalists will do: more coal, oil, gas and new nuclear. You don't promote mountain top removal, fracking, coal gas, tar sands or shale oil (all of which must be stopped immediately under workers' government, in my opinion). Yet instead of revolutionary, transitional demands to transform the economy, you defend a capitalist-promoted technology that has already compromised humanity's future with radioactive waste, and could easily irradiate the entire planet. Why?

Revolutionaries want to move beyond capitalism's path of profit-driven destruction! Say clearly: only a revolutionary workers government can, with workers councils and careful planning, save the working class, humanity and the planet; and here's how.

Comradely greetings,
Chris Kinder

***WV* Replies:**

Peddling an "alternative energy" agenda is entirely consistent with continued capitalist rule and imperialist depredation. When the German parliament (Bundestag) voted this summer to close all of the country's nuclear power plants by 2022, Chancellor Angela Merkel tapped renewable sources (wind, biomass, solar and hydroelectric) to pick up the slack. Renewables already account for 20 percent of Germany's electricity generation. In the U.S., advanced biofuels are ready to be rapidly commercialized for military use. Soon drone aircraft will fly with a reduced carbon footprint while raining down death and destruction on neocolonial peoples.

We want nothing to do with advising the bourgeoisie on how best to meet its energy needs, which is tantamount to helping prop up the decaying and anarchic profit system. Not so Kinder, who also decries "climate change" as a "devastating threat" separate and apart from "capitalism itself." In fact, shattering the capitalist order and establishing an internationally planned, socialist economy is the key to overcoming major ecological problems. Human-derived climate change is no exception, as we detailed in our two-part article "Capitalism and Global Warming" (*WV* Nos. 965 and 966, 24 September and 8 October 2010).

Our goal as Marxists is to eliminate material scarcity. In that pursuit, we defend the gains of science and technology, and a socialist society would build on these advances. But when the proletariat first seizes state power, it ***will*** have to "take over capitalist industry as is" and qualitatively develop the productive forces from there. No amount of wishful thinking regarding what is "possible" can make it otherwise. We are not so presumptuous as to preclude the use of fossil fuels or nuclear power in a workers state, as these energy sources could well prove crucial in modernizing and developing much of the world. At the same time, when workers are in charge of production, energy would be generated in the most rational, efficient and safe manner possible.

Judging by this letter and another in the September/October 2011 issue of the San Francisco-based *Socialist Viewpoint*, Kinder is quite busy proselytizing the petty-bourgeois anti-nuclear gospel. In his zeal, he even resorts to shamelessly attempting to frame us up as backhanded supporters of the nuclear reactor owners at Fukushima and elsewhere. As evidence, he offers up the following sentence from our article: "Only then, based on an international division of labor, will it be possible to consider whether it is really necessary to construct nuclear power plants in thickly settled earthquake zones like Japan." It is a dim formulation, but not one that backs

*continued on page 9*

Asahi Shimbun

**Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima by U.S., 6 August 1945.**

**TROTSKY**

## Those Who Labor Must Rule!

*Emerging in the first half of the 19th century as a mass independent workers movement, the British Chartists advanced revolutionary republican principles while leading the workers in class struggle. James Bronterre O'Brien, an Irish-born leader of the movement, gave voice to the need for the working class to fight in its own interests instead of begging its oppressors.*

**LENIN**

I hate long discussions and disquisitions upon the rights and privileges of the oppressed. I hate such arguments as go to prove that hawks should not prey upon doves; wolves on lambs; or the idlers of society upon the productive classes; I hate all appeals to the morality of monsters....

We have had enough of moral and learned strictures upon abstract rights and duties, which have left the respective parties *in statu quo*—the one plundering, the other being plundered,...

My motto is..."What you ***take*** you may have." I will not attempt to deal with the abstract question of right, but will proceed to show that it is POWER, solid, substantial POWER, that the millions must obtain ***and retain***, if they would enjoy the produce of their own labour and the privileges of freemen.

—James Bronterre O'Brien (1837), quoted in Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (1984)

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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## Cliffites Back Capitalist Party in Elections

# Thailand: Imperialists Demand "Stability"

*The following article is reprinted from* Australasian Spartacist *No. 214 (Spring 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

Australasian SPARTACIST

In a widely anticipated outcome, the bourgeois party Pheu Thai (PT) won Thailand's 3 July general elections, defeating Abhisit Vejjajiva's ruling Democrat Party (DP), which had been installed in government following a judicial coup in 2008. Yingluck Shinawatra, the newly elected PT prime minister, is the sister of exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, broadly seen as de facto leader of the party. Among those backing PT in the elections was Giles Ji Ungpakorn, exiled founding member of Turn Left Thailand and a member of the Cliffite British Socialist Workers Party. His article trumpeting the PT election victory as "a slap in the face for the dictatorship" was eagerly republished by much of the reformist left in Australia, including Solidarity, Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance. However this was far from a victory for the oppressed Thai masses.

Like Thaksin's earlier Thai Rak Thai party (banned after the 2006 military coup that ousted Thaksin), the bourgeois Pheu Thai presents a nationalist, populist program that postures to ameliorate conditions for the oppressed masses. Election pledges such as raising the minimum daily wage to 300 baht (about $10), debt restructuring for the poor and a guaranteed price for rice farmers ensured widespread support for PT among the impoverished rural masses in the populous north and northeast of the country. For Pheu Thai, such reforms serve to co-opt and contain plebeian discontent within the framework of the brutal and exploitative capitalist system. With concerns among the imperialists about parts of PT's populist platform, particularly raising the minimum wage, a key purpose of Thaksin's visit to Japan in August was to assure the Japanese imperialists that "wage increases [will] not be that high and corporate taxes [will] also be reduced" (*Nikkei Shimbun*, 24 August).

Economically, Thailand is largely a neocolony of Japan—some 40 percent of total foreign investment is from Japan—while the anti-communist alliance with the U.S. dominates politically. The imperialists have made it clear that they are running out of patience with the ongoing bitter divisions within the Thai bourgeoisie, centred around PT and its Red Shirt supporters on one side and the DP and Yellow Shirts on the other. The neocolonial masters are demanding their Thai underlings come together to keep the oppressed and poor down and ensure a stable environment for capitalist exploitation. U.S. president Barack Obama phoned Yingluck after the election to congratulate her. Together they affirmed the importance of the U.S.-Thai alliance and pledged to ensure "peace and stability" in the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier, *Nikkei Shimbun*, mouthpiece of Japanese imperialism, wrote in a 5 July post-election editorial: "It is desirable also for stability in the region that an end will be put to the serious domestic strife. More than anything else, it is necessary for the next PM Yingluck to work towards national reconciliation."

AFP

Reuters

**Above: Anti-government protesters face off against police in Bangkok, April 2010. Right: Yingluck Shinawatra kneels before portrait of King Bhumibol as she receives royal command appointing her prime minister, August 8.**

## Abolish the Monarchy! For a Workers and Peasants Government!

Indeed, Yingluck Shinawatra campaigned under the banner of "reconciliation" during the elections. With its large victory, and particularly its support from the poorer layers of society, PT is well placed to deliver on the demands of the imperialist masters and Thai bourgeoisie for "stability." Furthermore, as reported in a 30 June *Asia Times* article, since February, "high-level secret talks" had been held between the royal palace, military and Thaksin camps in which the military agreed to allow Pheu Thai to form a government. In exchange, Thaksin's PT would not pursue reprisals against military leaders over the 2006 coup and the 2010 bloody crackdown against anti-government Red Shirt protesters, and "refrain broadly from intervening in military affairs."

Thaksin's envoy was also pushed to "rein in the anti-monarchy elements in his camp." In her first official address to the nation as PM, Yingluck pledged her loyalty to the deeply repressive monarchy, a symbol and purveyor of Thai nationalism, and historic rallying point for capitalist reaction in Thailand. In mid-September, the new PT coalition government denied bail to labour activist and Red Shirt supporter, Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, in prison for allegedly insulting the king, and has already jailed a further three people under the *lèse majesté* law. We say: Free all those arrested under this draconian law! Drop the charges! Down with the *lèse majesté* law! Abolish the monarchy!

As revolutionary Marxists, the International Communist League (ICL) has defended the Red Shirt activists against bloody state repression. At the same time we stand in political opposition to this bourgeois-populist movement, which is closely allied to Pheu Thai and is defined by its support to, and from, the billionaire telecommunications mogul Thaksin. The Red Shirts' aims and politics are counterposed to the interests of the workers and rural toilers who have rallied behind it (see "Thailand: For a Workers and Peasants Government!" *WV* No. 972, 21 January).

In contrast to this principled class line, Ungpakorn, and his pseudo-Marxist cheerleaders internationally, enthusiastically promote the Red Shirts. In doing so, they reinforce deadly illusions in the capitalist state by pushing the liberal reformist lie that, with enough pressure from the masses, the state can be forced to reorder its priorities in the interests of the working class and oppressed. Following the elections, Ungpakorn wrote, "It will be up to the Red Shirt movement to push the Government into making more radical reforms rather than doing secret and dirty compromises with the Military and the elites." Calling on the new PT government to "start to build a welfare state," he counsels that money for state subsidies such as cheap, government-subsidised rice "should come from taxing the rich and drastically cutting the Military budget" (redthaisocialist.com, 6 September). The blood-drenched Thai military stands at the core of the capitalist state, along with the police, courts and prisons. This state exists to defend the rule of the Thai bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed but must be shattered and replaced by a workers state.

### For a Trotskyist Party, Tribune of the People

In semicolonial countries like Thailand, the role of bourgeois-nationalist governments, including that of Yingluck's Pheu Thai, is to ensure the exploitation of the masses and the plunder of resources to strengthen the power and the profits of the local bourgeoisie and their imperialist masters. In doing so they act to ruthlessly enforce tbe capitalist order. During the election campaign PT pledged to reinforce "drug suppression," with Thaksin ominously promising to "eliminate the drugs problem within 12 months" (*The Nation on Sunday*, 24 April). The Thaksin government's savage "war on drugs" resulted in some 3,000 extrajudicial killings by the police and military. Such campaigns mean general state repression against anybody deemed "undesirable," serving to regiment and intimidate the masses and directly threaten the working class. Similarly, Thaksin's bloody campaign against the Malay Muslim minority in the south also meant the slaughter of many. "Emergency rule," introduced in three southern provinces by the Thaksin government in 2005, was extended by the outgoing Vejjajiva government this July. The Thai working class must defend the Muslim minority against the ongoing state repression, without giving any political support to the Islamists. Fighting for full democratic and national rights, it must demand that the Thai military and security forces get out of the southern provinces.

The antagonisms between the Red Shirt and Yellow Shirt camps that have dominated Thai politics over the past few years reflect the divisions within the ruling class over how to deal with the fundamental contradictions of Thai capitalist society. With its strong, modern industrial sector based on massive imperialist investment resting alongside an impoverished rural and urban petty bourgeoisie, Thailand is a classic case of combined and uneven development. The growth of industry has created a modern industrial proletariat with immense social weight and potential social power. Women, deeply oppressed in the predominantly Buddhist

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# Young Spartacus

# Economics of a Workers State in Transition to Socialism

*We are pleased to publish a class by Spartacist League Central Committee member Jaseph Seymour given for our SYC members in Oakland, Califarnia, an 6 August 2005. It has been edited far publicatian and slightly expanded by* Young Spartacus *in collaboratian with comrade Seymour.*

The fundamental goal of the early, pre-Marx socialist movement was economic equality, considered to be both immediately achievable and ultimately desirable. That is, there was no conception of a higher level of economic development made possible by the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. The Conspiracy of Equals was the first revolutionary communist organization, emerging in the latter phase of the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century. Its program was a communism of consumption and distribution. The revolutionary government would provide larger houses and proportionally more food, clothing and other necessities to families with more children.

One of Marx's great theoretical contributions was to shift the axis of the socialist movement from equality in the sphere of consumption to entirely overcoming economic scarcity through progressively raising the level of productive forces. To be sure, in a classless, communist society, everyone will have equal access to consumable resources. But there will undoubtedly be a huge diversity of individual lifestyles corresponding to very different levels of individual utilization of those resources.

I'm beginning this educational with that point because, in some important ways, we have been thrown back into the intellectual universe of the early Marx. If you take a survey of 100 students and you ask them what socialism means, the overwhelming majority will say it's about economic equality. They will tell you it means that everyone has more or less the same living standard. Very few of them would reply that the goal of socialism is to raise the level of production and labor productivity to such an advanced level that the division of consumable resources among individuals will no longer be a source of social conflict or even social concern. But that is our ultimate goal.

Unfortunately, getting there will require a relatively lengthy historical period after the proletarian socialist revolution has expropriated the capitalist class. In that society in transition to socialism, economic scarcity—and therefore certain kinds of economic inequality—will continue to exist. When you think about it, this is obviously true at the international level. It will take generations of an internationally planned socialist economy to raise the living standards of the populations of China, India, other Asian countries, Latin America and Africa to those of the so-called First World.

Novosti

NASA

**Below: Peasant scene in prerevolutionary Russia, 1902. Left: Soviets launch Sputnik (inset), world's first satellite, 1957. Despite Stalinist misrule, USSR's collectivized economy transformed society.**

Countess M.G. Kleinmichel

But even in a workers state in an advanced area like North America or Europe there would still be certain kinds of economic inequality. Marx spoke about this in his *Critique af the Gatha Pragramme* (1875). People would still have to expend a lot of time and a lot of energy doing what Marx called alienated labor, that is, working at jobs that they would not do unless they got paid for them. Some jobs are physically harder, dirtier, more boring, more unpleasant or, in some cases, more dangerous than others. So coal miners and construction workers would command higher wages than data processors who work in comfortable offices. Workers who have economically valuable skills acquired through lengthy training, such as airline pilots, would get higher wages than flight attendants and baggage handlers. That's just the overhead cost of what Marx called the initial phase of communism in society.

There is another important source of economic inequality in the initial phase after the proletarian revolution. A fundamental goal and feature of a fully communist society is the replacement of the nuclear family by collective institutions for nurturing and socializing children. But this most fundamental of all social transformations is, again, going to be the work of generations. For a historically significant period the family will still be the basic social unit and therefore the basic economic spending unit.

So take two families, both of whom have the equivalent income of $70,000 a year. The first has one child, and the second has three children. The first family will have a somewhat higher standard of living. The difference will be nowhere near as great as under capitalism. There will be free medical care. There will be affordable housing. There will be free, quality education from day-care centers through university and beyond. But income will not be simply proportional to family size. Again, Marx mentioned this in his *Critique af the Gatha Programme.*

John Javellana

**Manila, Phillppines: Scouring garbage dump, 2007.**

## Economic Planning by Workers Democracy

Eliminating economic inequality in all its forms requires overcoming economic scarcity through progressively raising the level of production. This will be achieved by using a portion of society's total output and investing it in the expansion of productive equipment that embodies the most developed technology.

But herein lies a contradiction. The more a workers government spends on building new factories, retooling existing factories, expanding and modernizing infrastructure (e.g., electric power grids, water supply systems, highways and railroads), the less it has available for direct personal and familial consumption. So, it will face the choice between a somewhat higher level of consumption in the short term versus a much higher level of consumption in the long term.

In the absence of international socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, this choice obviously would be especially painful and conflict-ridden in a nationally isolated and economically backward workers state. But even in a future workers state in the U.S. or West Europe with much greater resources at its disposal, the division between consumption and investment would still be a politically divisive issue, in which there are likely to be strongly held differences within the working class. "I want as much as I can have now, man, not in ten or twenty years from now. For all I know, I may be dead by then." You are going to get that argument.

In order for the democratic organs of a workers government to make rational decisions concerning the division of total output between consumption and investment, the trade-off between the two has to be quantified. If we increase investment in productive capacity from 13 to 15 percent of total output, how much greater will the output of consumable resources be in five years, in ten years, in fifteen years?

Fortunately for us, these types of questions were discussed and investigated in depth in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. A rich economic literature, written from a Marxist perspective, was generated in the course of the debate and factional struggle over the establishment of a centrally planned, collectivized economy. One Soviet economist, G.A. Feldman, developed a theoretical model for a long-term economic plan, that is, covering 20 to 40 years. In my opinion, Feldman's work "On the Theory of Growth Rates of National Income" is an extremely important contribution to a Marxist understanding of the economics of the transition period. You can find the English translation in Nicolas Spulber, ed., *Foundations af Saviet Strategy for Economic Growth* (1964). Feldman adapted a model developed much earlier by Marx to a centrally planned, collectivized economy, while

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# Students in Capitalist America: Huge Debt, No Jobs, No Future

## Free, Quality Higher Education for All!

As Karl Marx said, "Ignorance never helped nor did anybody any good." Even given the class bias inherent in what is taught in the schools under capitalism, knowledge is an invaluable tool for those who seek to struggle for a better world. But this is the opposite of what the ruling class seeks to get out of the education system. That anyone should pay for the "privilege" of learning about the world makes sense only in the twisted logic of capitalist profit. To the capitalist financiers, mounting tuition and soaring student debt mean easy prey and big money. Every year, millions mortgage their futures, taking on debilitating student loans in order to attain the educational credentials necessary for a shot at the shrinking number of decent jobs left in the "world's only superpower." Students who graduate college have an average of $24,000 in loans. For higher degrees, debt ranged between $50,000 and $150,000. By the end of this year there will likely be ***over a trillion dollars*** in outstanding student loans, twice what they were five years ago.

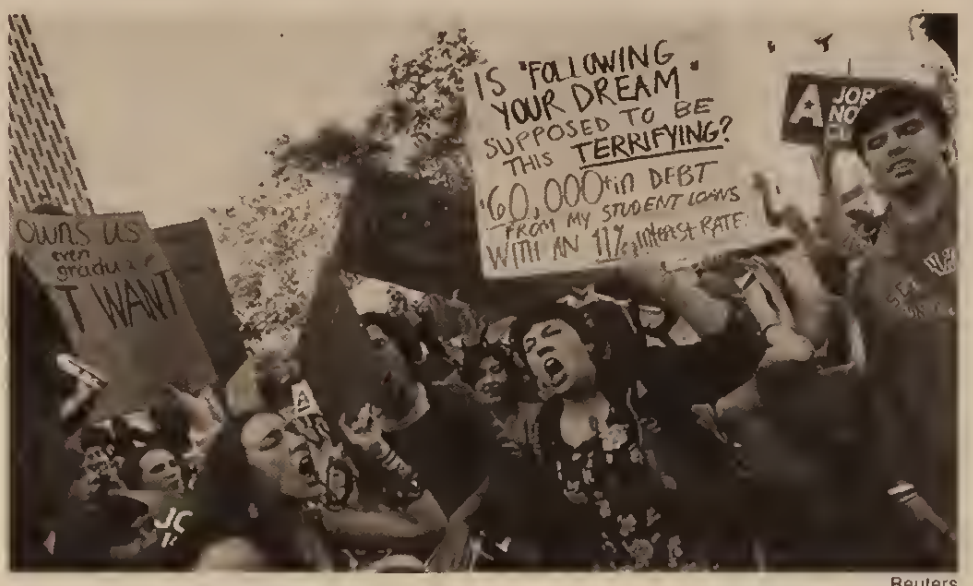
In capitalist America, the lie has long been that anyone who studies hard and gets a good education will find the door wide open to a better life. While poor and working-class youth with only a high school diploma are simply consigned to a future of minimum-wage service jobs, if they're lucky, many who claw and borrow their way to a degree don't have it that much better. As bankers vie for bonuses and bailouts and capitalists enjoy record profits after layoffs and "restructuring," students and recent graduates are fenced into a bleak future of mounting debt and dwindling job prospects. Recent graduates join unemployed millions scrambling for low-wage, dead-end jobs, often facing the monthly choice between rent and groceries—eviction and starvation. Over 40 percent of 2010 college graduates couldn't find employment by spring the following year, according to a Rutgers University study.

Young Spartacus

**Spartacus Youth Club contingent at UCLA protest against attacks on affirmative action, May 1998.**

Tuition has been rising drastically across the country, especially at public universities and colleges decimated hy budget cuts. Once almost free, annual tuition and fees for California residents at the University of California have more than tripled over the past ten years—to over $13,000. Each wave of tuition hikes at public universities and colleges drives out another layer of working-class and particularly black students. At the same time, overall college enrollment has been soaring nationwide, especially as those unable to find work return to school. Able to choose from a glut of job seekers, employers prefer those with college degrees—an estimated 59 percent of available jobs in the U.S. now require at least some college, according to a Georgetown University study.

Meanwhile, funding for public primary and secondary schools has been slashed, with disastrous consequences for the quality of education. The Obama administration's education "reforms" have meant the further gutting of public schools serving poor and minority youth while showcasing select well-funded private charter schools as an "alternative" (see "Obama's War on Public Education," *WV* No. 967, 22 October 2010). Desperate to attain employable skills, students increasingly attend for-profit colleges, such as the University of Phoenix and DeVry. Such schools have far more than doubled their enrollment over the past ten years, even as their graduation rates and their post-graduation employment rates remain a fraction of those of traditional institutions. The government's answer has been to limit loans to students attending poorer-quality campuses.




Reuters

**NYC: Students and other Occupy Wall Street protesters, October 5.**

Those saddled with an underwater home mortgage (where the balance is more than the value of the property) or drowning in credit-card debt have the last-ditch option of declaring bankruptcy—a "right" enshrined in law since 1841. But for those whose debt stems from an attempt to learn something, even fewer options are available. While federal loans have long been considered "non-dischargeable," under a 2005 law private student loans are now also not generally allowed to be written off under bankruptcy, joining a select list including child support, back taxes and debts stemming from drunk driving.

By one estimate, 20 percent of all federal student loans that went into repayment in 1995 (during relatively better economic times) had gone into default by 2010. Delinquent payments mean mounting fines and fees as voracious creditors seek to pry every last morsel from the bones of their victims. Student loan debt can be garnished from wages indefinitely, and compounding late fees can amount to many times the value of the original amount loaned. This translates into obscene profits for the capitalists—from 1995 to 2005, the stock of Sallie Mae, the largest U.S. student loan corporation, returned over 1,900 percent.

The Obama administration touts loan "forgiveness" programs, which simply begun in 2009, which lower payments only at the cost of drastically increasing the term of debt and interest, potentially more than doubling total interest owed. As if things weren't bad enough, in the midst of the recent phony "debt ceiling crisis," Democrats and Republicans rammed through a further reduction in federal loans, eliminating subsidized loans for graduate and professional students—meaning that they owe interest the moment they set foot on campus.

As is always the case in the U.S., minorities and black people in particular get hit first and worst. Private lenders charge discriminatory rates based on which school a student attends. Those schools with the highest minority populations have typically been profiled, "redlined" and hit with the highest rates. An estimated two-thirds of all black college students who drop out do so because they cannot afford to continue.

In 1865, the then-progressive capitalist North defeated the Southern system of slavery in the American Civil War. Following the Northern victory, some of the first public schools were established in the South, with the understanding that an educated workforce was more productive than illiterate slaves. Today in America, however, as manufacturing jobs continue to evaporate and the imperialists ravage the globe in search of quick fixes to jack up their declining rate of profit, a decent education for most youth is no longer on the agenda for the capitalists, or for either of their two parties—the Democrats or the Republicans.

Under capitalism, the rulers maintain elite schools as preserves for their offspring and to train a new generation of managers and technicians. For the education of those they exploit and oppress, they spend only what they can realize back in profit and what they have conceded as a result of hard class battle. The capitalist rulers need skilled workers, but they benefit from a working class chained by debt and beaten down, until it takes whatever scraps are offered and thanks the bosses for the opportunity.

It is a measure of the decay in society that the only way for the majority of working class and poor to get a college education is to take on tens of thousands of dollars in loans, only to find themselves reduced to indentured servitude to pay back their financial usurers. The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students. This is linked to our fight for a socialist future where the resources and wealth of society are dedicated to the advancement of everyone and not to the exclusive benefit of a tiny capitalist class. Liberals constantly demand "money for education, not for war" as an answer to the vast inequality in society. But to get the money for jobs, education and health care, to make life livable for blacks, immigrants, all working people and the poor, we must break the power of the bourgeoisie.

Working people and youth in the U.S. and around the world must throw off illusions in the reformability of this dead-end system and join the revolutionary struggle for socialism across the globe. Under the rule of the working class, there would not only be education for all, but also ***jobs for all***. Universal education, to the highest levels, will be a key component in developing a new socialist society where humankind will transcend the daily struggle for existence and rise to undreamed-of heights. Then, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*: "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." ■

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# Workers State...

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making certain important extensions and modifications of it.

In the second volume of *Capital*, Marx developed a theoretical model of expanded production under capitalism. Marx divided the economy into two basic sectors: consumer goods and producer (or capital) goods. Consumer goods and services are things that directly satisfy personal needs and desires. Producer goods are things that directly or indirectly generate consumer goods. A shirt is a consumer good. A sewing machine that makes the shirt is a producer good, as is a power loom that weaves the cotton cloth from which the shirt is made. A loaf of bread is a consumer good. The oven in which it is baked and the agricultural combine which harvests the wheat or oats from which it is made are producer goods.

Feldman extended Marx's model to a workers state by dividing the producer goods sector into two basic subsectors. There are producer goods that make consumer goods and there are producer goods that make additional producer goods. A sewing machine is an example of the former. Machine tools such as lathes, which make machinery, including sewing machines, fall into the latter category. Many producer goods are not technologically specific, hut can be used to expand either the capacity of the consumer goods sector or the capacity of the producer goods sector. A steel mill can make steel for automobiles or for construction equipment. Cement mixers and earthmovers can be used to construct apartment houses or factories. A hydroelectric plant can generate electricity to run household appliances as well as factory assembly lines.

Thus there are two basic factors that determine the growth rates of total output of productive capacity and consumable resources. One is the division of the total output between the consumer goods sector and producer goods sector. The second is the division of the producer goods sector between producer goods geared to the consumer goods sector and producer goods geared to expanding more producer goods.

Take two socialist economies, both of which expend 25 percent of total output in the producer goods sector. In the first economy, 75 percent of this investment in producer goods is geared to expanding the output of the consumer goods sector; in the second, 50 percent. In the first economy, consumption will increase faster in the initial period of the economic plan but more slowly later on. In the second it's just the opposite. By adjusting the proportions it is possible to develop a range of alternative economic plans, ranging from those which maximize short-term consumption to those that maximize productive resources (and therefore consumption) in the long term.

So the planning authority would present to the highest body of a workers government, i.e., the central assembly of workers councils, a range of maybe six alternative long-term plans to he debated and decided upon. This is likely to be a contentious issue. Some delegates are going to argue: "Our workers and poor people have just made a revolution. They expect and demand a big, dramatic improvement in their living standards, not just promises of a big improvement 15 or 20 years from now. We want Plan A." Other delegates will say: "Let's not be shortsighted about this. Our goal is to expand productive capacity and labor productivity. Plan C does that the best. Granted, consumption will increase more slowly in the immediate period than it otherwise could, but we think that is the price we want to pay."

Once the long-term growth rates of total output, the means of production and the consumable resources are all determined, it is then possible to work out a comprehensive economic plan for the various intervening periods—one year, two years, five years. Say a plan is adopted by the central assembly of workers councils. According to this plan, in five years the annual per capita income will be the equivalent of $60,000. On the basis of existing consumption patterns, consumer surveys and consultation with consumer cooperatives, one can more or less accurately project the basic pattern corresponding to that level of income. For example, $15,000 is estimated for housing, $10,000 for food, $10,000 for automotive and other modes of transportation, etc.

Another key element in the economic planning of a workers state, especially in the more advanced countries like the U.S., Germany and Japan, is to invest some of its total output in providing crucial resources, money and technological expertise to the underdeveloped countries to help them to qualitatively raise the level of production on the road to building socialism.

## For Market Calculation, Not Market Competition

Once the basic pattern of final goods is projected, it then becomes possible to figure out the inputs of basic raw materials and intermediate products. How much steel, aluminum and other metals do you need? How much plastic, cotton and synthetic cloth, cement, rubber and the like?

The technology and information for this, incidentally, already exists. There are theoretical models and empirical studies which relate the output of raw materials and intermediate goods necessary to produce a given array of final goods. This is called input-output analysis. Significantly, the pioneer theorist and initial investigator of input-output analysis, Wassily Leontief, was a student at the University of Leningrad in the mid 1920s. So clearly his development of input-output analysis was conditioned by the rich discussion and debate among Soviet economists and other intellectuals about how a centrally planned, collectivized economy would work in practice.

Basil Blackwell, Inc.

**Above: Trotskyist Left Oppositionists exiled to Siberia by Stalin demonstrate on anniversary of October Revolution, 1928. Trotskyists opposed bureaucratic degeneration of Soviet workers state, upheld program of Leninism. Inset: 1927 Platform of Joint Opposition, signed by Trotsky and 12 other Bolshevik leaders.**

In the early 1930s, Trotsky was extremely critical of the Stalin regime's destructive economic adventurism and bureaucratic commandism. In the course of an article attacking this, Trotsky made a sort of statement of general principles: "Only through the inter-reaction of these three elements, state planning, the market, and Soviet democracy, can the correct direction of the economy of the transitional epoch be attained" ("The Soviet Economy in Danger," October 1932). This is true for a future American workers state as well as for the Soviet Union at the time. The Soviet Union in 1932 was a degenerated workers state ruled by a conservative, parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, which a workers state after a proletarian revolution in the U.S. would presumably not be.

Thus far, I have mainly discussed aspects of state planning. I've introduced the question of workers democracy mainly in terms of deciding the basic parameters of economic growth at the highest level. But I have not yet talked about the role of the market. It's a complicated question. One area where the market is important, and in certain respects dominant, is in determining the specific output mix of consumer goods.

There are literally tens of thousands of types, styles and sizes of apparel. I became painfully aware of this a few weeks ago when I helped my daughter move into a new place with her boyfriend. I swear she has at least 80 pairs of shoes, all of them different styles. There are thousands of different kinds of household appliances, utensils and furniture. Even in a collectivized economy there will be dozens of types and models of automobiles. Not everyone is going to want to drive the same kind of car. So it makes no sense to subject the detailed output of consumer goods to even a short-term plan. Output should be constantly adjusted to the changing structure of demand.

However, rapidly and efficiently coordinating the supply and demand in a collectivized economy does *not* require atomized competition between state-owned enterprises. In Stalinist-ruled workers states, such as the former Soviet Union or China today, the terms "market socialism" and "market reforms" mean subjecting enterprises to competition with one another. Managers are given the authority to decide what to produce in what quantities, and they are instructed to sell their products at the highest available price in the market, either to consumers or to other enterprises. The stated goal is to maximize enterprise profitability, and usually the income of the managers and also the workers is tied to profitability (or negatively to losses). We are opposed to this system because it replicates many of the inequities and irrationalities of the capitalist market system.

In honor of my daughter, I will give the example of the shoe industry operated under the conditions of "market socialism" in a bureaucratically deformed workers state such as China. There are two shoe factories—we'll call them A and B—and they both produce standard men's dress shoes (which probably none of you in this room has ever worn nor intends to wear). Let's say that Factory A is relatively new, so that its equipment is much more technologically advanced than Factory B. Therefore, Factory A can produce the same pair of shoes using 25 percent less labor time than Factory B can.

The market price for a pair of shoes is equal to the average cost of production for the industry as a whole. Factory A is producing below the average cost, so it is making a handsome profit. Its managers are getting a nice salary and bonuses, and its workers are also getting substantial wage increases because it's making money. On the other hand, Factory B, which makes the same thing, is chronically losing money because its costs are above the average of the industry and the going market price. Unless the government then subsidizes this factory, some workers are going to be laid off or all

Getty

**Line at job fair, New York City, November 2009. Unemployment is endemic to capitalist system.**

workers will have to take cuts in wages and benefits just like under capitalism, through no fault of their own.

We are opposed to atomized competition between state enterprises. We are for using market calculation but not market competition. We advocate what can be called a centrally managed market system in the consumer goods sector. How would this operate? Again I will go back to my shoe industry example. There would be a central distribution agency that commands the output of several shoe factories. It supplies shoes to retail outlets and consumer cooperatives. You

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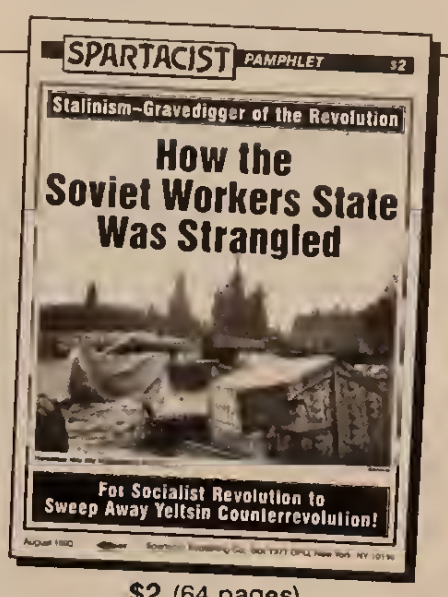


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could even buy them on the Internet.

Let's say that as a result of miscalculation or changing demand there is an oversupply of dress shoes and an undersupply of sporting goods shoes (running shoes, hiking boots, basketball shoes, especially those that are endorsed by Michael Jordan). So what happens with this system? The directors of the distributive agency call up some factories and say, "OK, cut back production of dress shoes, increase production of sporting goods shoes. If you need special equipment that you don't have, if your workers need retraining, fine. We'll provide it." End of story. The basic point is that management remains centralized but utilizes market calculation in order to mesh supply and demand in this particular sector.

## Syndicalism vs. Workers Government

I want to discuss the differences between our Marxist program and the syndicalist program for the post-revolutionary organization of the economy. Before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, revolutionary syndicalism was the main left-wing alternative to Marxism. A number of leading figures in the early communist movement, who later became supporters of the Trotskyist Left Opposition, started out not as Marxists but as revolutionary syndicalists: James P. Cannon in the U.S., Alfred Rosmer in France, Andrés Nin in Spain.

The crux of the syndicalist program for the post-capitalist reorganization of the economy is that the workers should exercise total managerial authority in autonomous enterprises or at least in some branches of the economy. There would be no higher governmental authority above the industrial syndicates. In a sense syndicalism is a proletarian or industrial version of anarchism. It was described as such by a British anarchist intellectual, George Woodcock, writing in the 1940s:

> "The syndicate, on the other hand, is based on the organization of the workers by industry at the place of work. The workers of each factory or depot or farm are an autonomous unit, who govern their own affairs and who make all the decisions as to the work they will do. These units are joined federally in a syndicate which serves to coordinate the actions of the workers in each industry. The federal organization has no authority over the workers in any branch, and cannot impose a veto on action like a trade union executive."
>
> —George Woodcock, *Railways and Society* (1943), excerpted in Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader* (1977)

In other words, the classic Bakuninite anarchist program of a federation of autonomous communes is here replaced by a federation of autonomous industrial or other economic units.

At the present time, neither in the United States nor anywhere else that I know of do we encounter and compete with significant syndicalist tendencies. So why do I want to talk about syndicalism? I have two reasons. One is that, if there is a significant upsurge of labor struggle in this country, many of the left-radical youth who are currently in and around the anarchist milieu will become workerist. Trust me on this, I've been through it. They will therefore subscribe to some kind of syndicalist program, which is an amalgam of anarchism and workerism.

The other reason is China. When the political situation in China opens up, and it will, I think that syndicalist ideas and even tendencies may gain a sympathetic hearing among Chinese workers. Chinese workers have already experienced a large dose of capitalism, and by all available evidence they don't like it. At the same time, many Chinese workers may well identify Marxism-Leninism and central planning with bureaucratic commandism, not to speak of corruption. So when things open up, some leftist-minded Chinese workers as well as intellectuals may say, "Let's kick out the capitalists and the CCP bureaucrats and the workers will take over and run by themselves the factories, construction sites, coal mines and railroads."

VAAP

**October 1917: Putilov factory workers and Pavlovsky Regiment exchange banner reading, "Long Live All-Russian Revolution as Prologue to Social Revolution in Europe. Under This Banner We Pledge to Achieve a Brotherhood of All Nations."**

There has never been and will never be an economy organized on syndicalist principles, just as there has never been and will never be a society organized on anarchist principles. But if we encounter a serious-minded leftist who subscribes to a syndicalist program, it is insufficient to say that such a program can never be realized. We also want to convince him that even if it were possible, in practice it would operate in a way contrary to the interests of the workers and of society in general.

The problem with syndicalism is very similar to that of "market socialism." A syndicalist program would necessarily replicate many of the inequities and irrationalities of capitalism. If economic units are genuinely autonomous of one another, they can only interact through market relations governed by changing conditions of supply and demand. Inevitably, this means that some workers will have to be unemployed or have to take cuts in income when the market turns against them.

At the risk of sounding like a shoe fetishist, let's consider the shoe industry again. (You can see that carrying shoe boxes up and down the stairs for a couple of weeks addled my brain!) This time we will examine it under the model of a syndicalist economy. The shoe-producing industry is organized as a single autonomous syndicate. This syndicate gets revenue by selling shoes to individuals and stores. In turn, it purchases leather, rubber, plastic and other inputs from other autonomous syndicates.

Let's say leather happens to be in oversupply. More leather is produced than is demanded by the shoe-producing syndicate for its current output and the consumer demand. The directors of the shoe-producing syndicate tell their counterparts in the leather processing syndicate, "We only need 80 percent of your leather, we're not going to buy any more because we don't need any more than that." So what is going to happen? These are autonomous enterprises. Some of the workers in the leather-producing industry are going to have to be laid off or, alternatively, all or some of them are going to have to take cuts in income and benefits because it is suffering reduced revenue.

## For Workers Democracy in the Control of Production

Even though people who advocate syndicalism think they are militantly anti-capitalist, their program would actually reproduce many of the inequities and irrationalities of capitalism, despite their good intentions. We are opposed to the syndicalist program of workers' management of autonomous enterprises. But we are for the maximal democratic participation of the workers in economic decision-making at the level of the factory, the construction site, the warehouse, the supermarket and the airport. The section on the Soviet Union in the 1938 Transitional Program states: "Factory committees should be returned the right to control production." This is our program, not only in the past but also in the future.

What does this mean concretely? How does it differ from the syndicalist program of workers management? What we mean by workers control of production in a socialized economy is that the democratically elected representatives of the workers would have an authoritative, consultative voice in all economic decisions at the enterprise as well as higher levels. Let's say that the industrial ministry in charge of aircraft production proposes to spend a couple of hundred million dollars retooling an older aircraft factory, replacing its antiquated machines with more up-to-date equipment. The managers, engineers, technicians would get together with the elected factory committee and jointly work out a concrete plan for retooling the enterprise. This would then be presented to the industrial ministry. The plan will not just come down from on high, with the workers having no say.

AP

**Workers strike for higher wages at Honda's Foshan auto parts plant in China's Guangdong province, June 2010.**

Another important area where elected factory committees would play an important role, even replacing direct managerial intervention, is in maintaining labor discipline. How to deal with a worker who is a perpetual goof-off or who is so incompetent that he disrupts production and maybe even endangers other workers? How do you deal with a worker who abuses sick leaves, who calls in sick just because he wants a day off to go fishing? It is much better that this kind of problem is handled by direct representatives of fellow workers who are more politically advanced and more socially responsible.

The basic point is that a centrally planned, collectivized economy is in no way incompatible with the very active and full participation of the workers at the most basic levels of the economy, as well as in the election of delegates to the soviets.

But unlike "workers management" schemes, workers control in a socialist economy does not allow individual factory committees to have the final say on the scope and composition of investment, since particular groups of workers cannot have unlimited claims on the state budget, i.e., on the *collective social surplus*. Resources for the replacement and expansion of the means of production, provision for the elderly and disabled, expenditure on schools and hospitals, etc., must be deducted from the total social product before distribution to individual workers. As Marx pointed out, "What the producer is deprived of in his capacity as a private individual benefits him directly or indirectly in his capacity as a member of society."

As Isaac Deutscher said in his speech "On Socialist Man" (1966):

> "We do not maintain that socialism is going to solve all predicaments of the human race. We are struggling in the first instance with the predicaments that are of man's making and that man can resolve. May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex and death—besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labour movement have taken on.... Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these." ■


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# Wall Street...

*(continued from page 1)*

or even a fixed set of demands, they do have a program: liberal reform of capitalism's financial sector. Issuing patriotic appeals to this country's purported democratic values, they raise slogans like: "We are the 99 percent," "Tax the rich," and "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out." Like the populists of more than a century ago, their program amounts to seeking to elect a government that would defend the interests of the little man against the "robber barons" of Wall Street.

It is false that "99 percent" of the population share common interests. There is a fundamental ***class divide*** in society between the capitalists—the tiny group of families that own industry and the banks—and the working class, whose labor is the source of the capitalists' profits. The working class is not just one more victim of capitalist austerity within the "99 percent." It is the only force with the potential power and historic interest to sweep away the capitalist system and rebuild society based on a centralized, planned economy.

In our interventions in NYC and around the country, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs are fighting to win militants to the Marxist understanding that the capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the poor, but must be shattered through proletarian revolution. Ending poverty, oppression and imperialist war requires workers rule internationally, opening the road to a world socialist society. We Trotskyists are dedicated to the task of building a revolutionary workers party to organize and lead that fight. Our model is the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the workers to power in the October 1917 Russian Revolution.

Our Marxist outlook is diametrically opposed to the OWS program of liberal, bourgeois populism, which comes wrapped up in red, white and blue, as seen in the number of U.S. flags flying in Zuccotti Park. At a recent OWS General Assembly meeting, a Spartacist League spokesman drew opposition when he denounced the presence of U.S. imperialism's banner, saying: "This is the flag that bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki! This is the flag that bombed and attacked Vietnam! This is the flag that represents oppression to the people of the world!"

Whatever the claims of the OWS organizers to the contrary, the dominant politics of the protests point straight to support to the Democratic Party, which no less than the Republicans is a party of the capitalist exploiters. One Democratic official recently observed of the protests, "Sure, there's been some crazy anarchy stuff, but overall, the Democrats like their message about Wall Street and accountability," adding that "it overlaps with our own message." In fact, with Obama channeling OWS grievances in his stump speeches, Democratic Party stalwarts like MoveOn.org are involved in organizing OWS actions for the purpose of bringing disenchanted voters back into the fold. Meanwhile, some Democratic Party strategists worry that signing on to the protests will alienate some of their financial backers. Key to mobilizing the workers in class struggle against the decaying capitalist order is the fight for their political independence from ***all*** bourgeois parties—Democrats, Republicans and Greens.

Juslyna Surowiec

Amon/Denver Post

**Left: Sign captures Occupy Wall Street organizers' appeals to cops, enforcers of capitalist rule, to join with protesters. Right: Colorado State cops do "their job," dragging away Occupy Denver protester, October 14.**

Reuters

**President Obama greets JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon at Business Council meeting in the White House, May 2010.**

Protest organizers propound the "belief that the American dream will live again" (as one OWS Web site posting said) and argue that the government, which is the executive committee of the ruling class as a whole, should do something good like regulate banks. This is a dead end for youth looking for revolutionary answers. American democracy is the democracy of the capitalist class, whose rule is based on brutal exploitation of workers, murderous oppression of blacks and other minorities and imperialist marauding around the world. As the 1960s militant Malcolm X remarked, "I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy.... I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare" ("The Ballot or the Bullet," 3 April 1964).

## American Populism and the Democrats

Appealing to the common man against the financiers has a long history in American bourgeois politics. The 1892 platform of the Populist Party strongly indicted the "Gilded Age": "The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few unprecedented in the history of mankind." The Populists did not desire to abolish but to moderate the despotism of the "few," to curtail the powers and reduce the privileges of the magnates of industry and finance. The movement reached the peak of its influence in 1896, when the Democrats ostensibly adopted its aims and Populist leader William Jennings Bryan won the Democratic presidential nomination, losing in November to Republican William McKinley.

The Populists were initially a multiracial movement, encompassing poor white and black farmers as well as small businessmen. But the heroic efforts of its organizers in the South were defeated when the local ruling class launched a wave of racist demagogy and violence. Many Populist leaders, such as Tom Watson in Georgia, turned against impoverished blacks and openly embraced racism. Many did this to carve out a niche in the Southern Democratic Party, which ruled over the Jim Crow system of entrenched racial segregation through police-state terror supplemented by the KKK's extralegal violence. On the other hand, the Populist movement also included people who would become key figures in the labor and socialist movements.

The Populist movement emerged in the period when the U.S. was preparing to enter the world stage as an imperialist power, one of a handful of advanced capitalist countries whose competition for spheres of exploitation around the world would lead to the devastation of two world wars and countless colonial wars. As Lenin described, imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism: the economy is dominated by monopolies, with the capital of the large banks combining with the capital of industrial corporations.

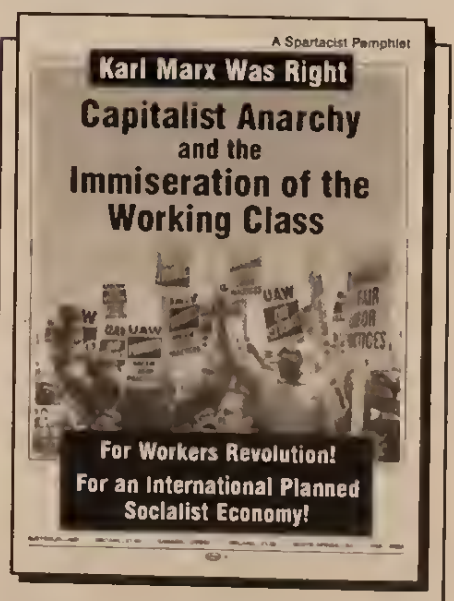
This crucial understanding is completely blurred by populist ideology. As we wrote in our 1997-98 series "Wall Street and the War Against Labor":

> "Central to the liberal populist outlook is a belief that the capitalist class is divided into two classes, so to speak: those directly involved in producing and marketing goods and services, and those whose incomes derive from financial dealings. The former are regarded as at least relatively progressive, while the latter are deemed outright reactionary....
>
> "The common interests of ***all*** elements of the American capitalist class—whether Wall Street investment bankers, Midwestern manufacturers, Texas oilmen or California agribusinessmen—are qualitatively greater and more important than their differences. All want to maximize the exploitation of labor and to minimize the overhead costs of government social programs."
>
> —reprinted in the 2009 Spartacist pamphlet, *Karl Marx Was Right: Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*

At the core of populist protest, yesterday and today, is the petty bourgeoisie, which is a heterogeneous and highly stratified social layer comprising, among others, students, professionals and small businessmen. Lacking social power and its own class perspective, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable of offering an alternative to capitalism. As the Trotskyist James Burnham wrote in the 1930s, during an earlier period of economic crisis and mass discontent, "The middle classes are seeking a way out of their impasse. But they have no possible way out of their own. And at last they must, in whole or in a division, face the ultimate choice: to line up behind one of the two basic classes and its program, to swing to the side of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat" (*The People's Front: The New Betrayal*, 1937).

A case in point is *Adbusters*, the Canadian magazine that issued the original call for a Wall Street occupation. This "anti-corporate" outfit has received funds from the Tides Foundation—a clearinghouse for the Ford and Gates foundations. But *Adbusters* doesn't just take money from fat cats; it also runs its own "grassroots capitalism"—the production of sneakers, which they hail as "ethical." Ask the workers in Pakistan getting the pitiful local minimum wage as they produce these "no logo" kicks if it feels more humane to slave over hemp rather than nylon.

The capitalist rulers have unleashed their police thugs on the "occupy" protests, even though this movement does not hinder the functioning of the profit system. It is an altogether different matter when workers cut off the flow of profits through strikes and other labor actions. When auto workers occupied plants in Flint, Michigan, in 1936-37, winning recognition of the United Auto Workers, they were part of a militant wave of labor struggle that gave rise to the CIO industrial unions. Those struggles were pitched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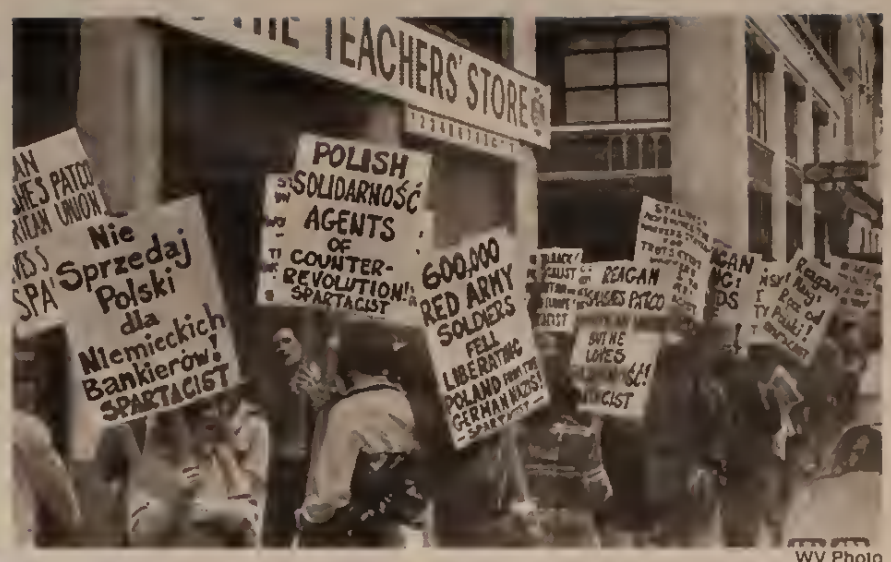
battles between the workers on one side and the cops, company thugs and capitalist courts and government on the other.

After decades of defeats for labor, most young activists view the working class as irrelevant to struggles for economic justice. Setting the stage for those defeats, the bureaucratic misleaders of the labor movement by and large abandoned the class-struggle methods that built the unions. In their role as the capitalists' labor lieutenants, they tie workers to their class enemy by promoting the interests of U.S. imperialism and supporting the Democratic Party.

The occupation of the Wisconsin State Capitol earlier this year ended in defeat precisely because the union leadership refused to use labor's strike weapon, instead diverting protest into a (failed) campaign to recall Republican politicians. The result is that the state's public sector unions have been decimated. Facing a great deal of disillusion with President Obama, who is a Wall Street Democrat, a good section of the trade-union officialdom has endorsed the OWS protests, seeing in them a means of re-energizing liberal support for Obama in the 2012 elections. The same purpose drives pseudo-socialists like the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party, whose hailing of the OWS protests is but the latest chapter in their history of reformist pressure politics.

Diana Walker




WV Photo

**Left: Lech Walesa with U.S. president George Bush at anti-Communist rally in Gdansk, Poland, July 1989. Right: Spartacists expose Walesa's Solidarność as company union for CIA, Vatican and Wall Street, NYC, September 1981. Capitalist counterrevolutionary Walesa was invited to address Occupy Wall Street protest.**

## The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

No protest movement will convince the capitalist ruling class and its government to change their stripes and begin acting in tbe interests of the "people." This country's "democracy" was founded on the enslavement of black Africans, and to this day black oppression remains a fundamental underpinning of the American capitalist system. The "American way" has meant the genocidal extermination of Native Americans, waves of deportations of immigrants, bloody battles with striking workers and a long list of savage wars the world over, most recently the invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and this year's bombing of Libya.

Doubleday

**Thundering against "moneyed interests," William Jennings Bryan won Democratic Party presidential nomination in 1896. Liberal populism ties workers to their class enemy.**

As opposed to the OWS organizers who endlessly speak about restoring democracy, Marxists understand that there is no "pure" democracy. As Lenin observed: "Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the 'democracy' of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*" (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918).

In a speech to the OWS crowd, liberal ideologue Naomi Klein hailed the 1999 anti-globalization protests for condemning corporations that were supposedly "becoming more powerful than governments," saying that this was "damaging to our democracies." The fact that capitalist governments the world over have been bailing out failing industries and banks during the current economic crisis exposes the fallacy that corporations have superceded the nation-state.

Klein sows illusions in a mythical golden age of "democratic" accountability. The reality is that for the capitalists, "democracy" serves as a veil to hide their class dictatorship, which they enforce through their state apparatus—armed forces, cops, courts and prisons. Cop brutality and the arrest of protesters are almost daily occurrences, giving a small taste of the terror daily meted out to ghetto and barrio residents. Yet the OWS organizers have continued to call on the "blue-collar police" to "join our conversation" and "speak of the crimes of your supervisors."

Neither is the problem simply one of "police misconduct." *All* cops, whatever their background and rank, are the attack dogs of the capitalist class. An SYC speaker stressed at a recent OWS General Assembly, "Cops are not workers. They beat strikers, kill black people and arrest protesters."

## Apostles of "Democratic" Counterrevolution

Liberal ideologue Naomi Klein and pseudo-Marxist academic Slavoj Zizek—leading lights at the OWS protests—like to rail against China as an affront to "democracy." In this, they are providing ideological service to Wall Street.

The 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist rule, liberating the country from imperialist subjugation and leading to massive advances for workers, peasants and deeply oppressed women. However, the peasant-based revolution was deformed from its inception, putting into power a bureaucratic nationalist regime akin to that of the Soviet Union after its degeneration under Stalin. Today, despite major inroads by both foreign and indigenous capitalists, the core elements of China's economy remain collectivized. State ownership of the banking system has promoted massive economic growth in China, mainly through investment in infrastructure. This stands in stark contrast to the profit-driven world's dominant capitalist economies, which have been mired in crisis. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to replace the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy with a regime of workers and peasants soviets (councils) committed to the fight for world socialist revolution.

The current protests against Wall Street are deeply stamped with the "death of communism" ideology that has been propounded by the bourgeoisie and its ideologues since the restoration of capitalist rule in the former Soviet Union in 1991-92. Zizek, who sometimes spouts "revolutionary" verbiage when it serves his "bad boy" image in academia, lectured OWS protesters about how "Communism failed absolutely." The core of his politics was seen when he hailed Obama's 2008 election as "a sign of hope in our otherwise dark times."

A measure of the bourgeois politics that define the OWS protests is the invitation offered by one organizer to former Polish president Lech Walesa to speak at Zuccotti Park. Walesa was the principal leader of Solidarność, which originated in 1980 out of workers strikes in the Polish deformed workers state but rapidly adopted an openly counterrevolutionary program for the restoration of capitalist rule. This was the only "union" beloved by the likes of right-wing U.S. president Ronald Reagan and his British counterpart, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. With the backing of the U.S. and European imperialists, the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracies and the Catholic church, Solidarność became the principal force for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland. We denounced Solidarność at the time as a company union for the CIA, bankers and the Vatican.

The government led by Walesa that took power in 1989 dismantled Poland's collectivized economy and implemented an economic "shock treatment" that destroyed the bulk of the social gains Poles had enjoyed under the deformed workers state—from virtually free health care to cheap, subsidized housing to pensions one could live on. In line with Catholic "family values," the right to a safe and free abortion was abolished. Inviting Walesa to speak at Zuccotti Park was to invite a Wall Street stooge to..."Occupy Wall Street"!

Today the basic premises of authentic Marxism must be motivated against the false and prevalent misidentification of the collapse of Stalinism with the failure of communism. Against those who purvey "death of communism" and illusions in capitalist "reform," we revolutionary Marxists tell the truth: the only road to eliminating economic scarcity is the fight for new October Revolutions. We have no illusions that this is an easy road. But the destructive anarchy of the capitalist mode of production will, if not overthrown, plunge all humanity into barbarism. The key task is the forging of a Leninist vanguard party, the necessary instrument for bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat. ■

# Letters...

*(continued from page 2)*

up Kinder's spurious charges. An international federation of workers states could make available considerable resources so that there would be no need to operate fission reactors in heavily populated areas prone to earthquakes.

When sounding the catastrophist alarm on global warming, Kinder exhibits a touching faith in the stability of world imperialism, which is currently floundering in a deep and ongoing economic crisis. He argues as if it were entirely inconceivable that this decaying capitalist system could produce another major war or a resurgence of fascism. For all his invective against nuclear power, it is the enormous nuclear weapons arsenals possessed by the imperialists that "could easily irradiate the entire planet." Even a "modest" regional nuclear exchange could entomb the globe in billowing ash, cooling the earth, destroying agriculture and killing a good portion of humanity. In the case of the U.S., the imperialist rulers, who possess the means to extinguish all human life, already intentionally unleashed nuclear holocaust on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Posturing as a "revolutionary" who is "for technology," Kinder is at bottom a technocratic reformist. No less than the reformist groups taken up in the *WV* No. 983 article, he is all too eager to conflate technology with how the capitalist magnates apply (and promote) it. Never mind that most of the world runs off fossil fuels and nuclear power. To just stop accessing mountaintop coal or other fossil fuels would be catastrophic, triggering massive blackouts and otherwise devastating people's lives and livelihoods. In enthusing over "renewable technology," Kinder also gives a free pass to the "green" bosses of the world like Solyndra.

The simple truth is that all capitalist industries are hazardous. With thousands of workers killed annually on the job in the U.S. alone, the bosses' murderous greed writ large creates conditions ensuring that deadly disasters happen with appalling regularity. For the bourgeoisie, the nuclear business is business as usual. When it comes to radioactive waste, which Kinder luridly claims "has already compromised humanity's future," the volume (and the number of lethal doses) is small compared to the total volume of poisons produced hy industry as a whole, many of which do not afford the advantage of decay to a benign state.

Instead of swearing off a technology because capitalist profiteering greatly magnifies its potential dangers, the response should be to marshal union power in a fight for safety. Our article reaffirmed the demand for "union control of working conditions and, where there are specific hazards, action to shut down dangerous facilities." Kinder's silence on this very real matter of life and death shows that his professed interest in breathing "revolutionary life into the class struggle" is so much smoke.

Although he fraudulently invokes Trotsky's Transitional Program, Kinder dumped revolutionary politics decades ago, when this one-time labor editor of *Workers Vanguard* quit our organization. As his letter amply demonstrates, he has since gone green-at-the-gills swimming in the Bay Area radical-liberal swamp. When he calls for "revolutionary, transitional demands to transform the economy," Kinder merely is looking to overhaul the capitalist energy sector. In fact, the purpose of the Transitional Program is to mobilize the proletariat in struggle around its concrete felt needs and link such struggles to the fight for workers revolution. Singling out an industry for elimination, as Kinder does, vitiates any fundamental critique of the capitalist system. Needless to say, such a program would be greeted less than kindly by the workers who would be out of a job. ■

# Qaddafi...

*(continued from page 1)*

the beginning of "a strong and democratic future" for Libya. United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon saluted the moment as a "historic transition."

The NATO war against Libya was a blatant demonstration of the imperialist system, in which a handful of advanced capitalist countries terrorize and subjugate the world's weaker and more backward societies. The "democracy" trumpeted by the imperialist rulers can be measured in the number of corpses of black African immigrants, many of whom have been rounded up during and in the wake of the rebel victory. Brought into Libya under the Qaddafi regime as a source of cheap labor, they have been targeted as "pro-Qaddafi mercenaries." Among the rebels' first acts as they seized areas formerly held by Qaddafi's forces was to carry out pogroms against these black Africans.

In perpetrating this racist vendetta, the ragtag forces brought to power by the NATO imperialists are true to their own reactionary values, and to those of their "democratic" paymasters. Obama's America remains a hellhole for the vast majority of black people, while the White House prides itself on having deported nearly 400,000 immigrants in the last year alone. For his part, Cameron launched a police dragnet in August in which more than 2,000 people were rounded up as punishment for the upheaval that swept cities throughout England against racist police terror and grinding austerity.

The UN, having sanctioned the NATO terror bombing of Libya, called for a "thorough investigation" into precisely how Qaddafi wound up dead after being captured alive, displaying the sanctimonious hypocrisy that courses through this den of imperialist thieves, their lackeys and victims. A U.S. State Department spokesman pledged that the new Libyan leaders—a collection of defectors from the Qaddafi regime, monarchists, Islamic fundamentalists, former CIA assets, tribal chiefs and others—would "provide a full accounting of what happened." This is like directing a psychopathic killer to investigate his victims' murders!

Even by their own cynical rules of war, which are only applied to the losers, the imperialists are guilty as hell of the assassination of the former Libyan ruler. According to press accounts, a U.S. Predator drone provided the surveillance on a convoy that included Qaddafi leaving Surt in the early morning hours of October 20. The convoy was then reportedly bombed by a French Mirage jet fighter. The Libyan rebels—with who knows what support from the imperialists' own special forces, which had been carrying out operations on the ground—moved in to finish off those who were still alive, decapitating one of them and then murdering Qaddafi.

The U.S. tried to assassinate Qaddafi, then considered a Soviet ally, as far back as 1986 when a bombing attack killed his infant daughter instead. For the past decade, the Libyan strongman had been an ally of the imperialists' "war on terror," providing torture chambers for the interrogation of supposed terror suspects who had undergone "rendition"—i.e., kidnapping—by U.S. forces around the globe. With the onset of the NATO air war in March, Qaddafi again became a target of choice, with NATO carrying out repeated attempts on his life.

## Imperialist Killers on the Loose

When France, Britain and the U.S. launched their air strikes, the International Communist League issued a 20 March statement calling for defense of Libya against imperialist attack. We called on "workers around the world to take a stand for military defense of semicolonial Libya.... Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step toward their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression" (see "Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!" *WV* No. 977, 1 April).

Now that Qaddafi has been assassinated, the imperialists are swooping in like vultures to claim the spoils of their dirty war. The NATO allies, particularly France and Italy, are at each other's throats over who is going to get the biggest share of Libya's oil wealth. When it was still the colonial overlord of the country in the decades before the end of World War II, Italy dropped poison gas on Libyan civilians and imprisoned more than 100,000 in concentration camps. As for France, the murder of Qaddafi came on the 50th anniversary of the massacre of Algerians in Paris protesting French imperialism's subjugation of their country. Hundreds were killed by police, who dumped their bodies into the Seine.

For the U.S., the most heavily armed and dangerous of all the imperialist powers, Qaddafi represents yet another notch in its belt of political assassinations, from the murder of Congolese nationalist Patrice Lumumba in 1961 to the killing of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara in Bolivia by soldiers trained, equipped and guided by the U.S. and many more before and since, including under the Obama administration. On May 1, a commando squad of Navy SEALs in Pakistan gunned down Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who himself was a monster nurtured by U.S. imperialism in the 1980s war in Afghanistan between CIA-funded reactionary Islamic cutthroats and the former Soviet workers state. The day before bin Laden's murder, NATO bombed Qaddafi's house, killing his son and three grandchildren.

On September 30, a missile fired by a U.S. drone in Yemen killed four men, two of whom were U.S. citizens. This attack, aimed at U.S. Islamic cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, was carefully planned and executed on orders from the Democratic Party White House (see "Al-Awlaki Assassination: U.S. State Terror," *WV* No. 988, 14 October). It was an open declaration that a U.S. citizen designated a "terrorist" can be summarily executed with no legal charges and no trial.

## Hands Off Iran!

Even the cowboys of the Bush administration, who were no less practiced in killing their perceived enemies abroad, at least thought they had to go through the charade of giving Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, a onetime U.S. ally, the pretense of a trial before his execution. Not so the Obama administration, which, as the *Huffington Post* (19 October) noted, "has made it clear that that pretense is no longer of interest."

Now the U.S. and its Israeli allies are aiming their sights, again, at Iran, with a crackpot story that defies belief. The story being peddled by Washington is that the Iranian government was behind a plot to kill the Saudi ambassador to the U.S., which they say was orchestrated by an Iranian American used car salesman who had been convinced—by an undercover DEA agent—that he was hiring a Mexican drug cartel for the job.

With mind-boggling hypocrisy, Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder condemned the very notion of plotting to commit a political assassination in another country as an outrage. Evidently, only the supremely arrogant leaders of the "world's only superpower" get to play that game, and then go after their semicolonial victims by charging them with the same. In a replay of the "weapons of mass destruction" myth wielded by Bush to invade and occupy Iraq, Obama is demanding that UN inspectors release all intelligence "showing that Iran is designing and experimenting with nuclear weapons technology." Rattling his nuclear-armed saber, Obama promised the "toughest sanctions" against Iran and declared "we don't take any options off the table." All of this underlines, as we have repeatedly stated, that Iran needs nuclear weapons, which in this imperialist-dominated world represent the only potential guarantee of national sovereignty.

There is no doubt that Qaddafi was a brutal dictator who violently suppressed anyone suspected of opposing his rule. Our military defense of Libya against the NATO bombers had nothing to do with political support to his capitalist regime. Nor do we politically defend Iran's theocratic bourgeois rulers. But the main enemies of the working people and oppressed masses of the world are the imperialist overlords. In any military conflict between the imperialists and the countries they subjugate, workers everywhere have a side with the latter. Conveying this understanding is part of our struggle for the socialist liberation of mankind from the brutal degradation of the capitalist exploiters.

AP

**Anti-Qaddafi rebels with Nigerian captive, September 17. Black Africans face threat of pogroms under imperialist-backed regime.**

## For International Socialist Revolution!

Defense of Libya against the NATO bombers should have been elementary, not only for proletarian revolutionary opponents of imperialism but for anyone opposed to the stronger capitalist powers imposing their will on weaker countries through overwhelming military might. This, however, was not the stance taken by the bulk of the self-proclaimed "socialist" left. Dancing to the imperialists' tune, reformists peddled unsubstantiated reports of massacres of civilians by Qaddafi's forces at the outset of the uprising against his regime and promoted the credentials of the Libyan "resistance." Others, like Workers World Party and its offshoot, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, opposed the U.S./NATO intervention. But they did so from the vantage point of their history of political support for the Qaddafi dictatorship.

As the ICL statement noted, what had essentially been a civil war between Qaddafi's Tripoli-based bourgeois regime and an imperialist-backed opposition based in the east of the country—a conflict in which the proletariat had no side—became subordinated to imperialist military intervention with the start of the bombing on March 19. Before the bombing began, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) was one of the groups championing the Libyan opposition. An article headlined "The West's Fear of Qaddafi's Fall" in *Socialist Worker* (24 February) opined that the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, part of the opposition forces, was less likely to "be so pliable" to imperialism. When the imperialists' attack began, so did the ISO's cover-up. Admitting that the National Front had long been a CIA asset, the ISO indulged in some fancy footwork to explain how the opposition had morphed from "rebels" into running dogs of the imperialists. In reality, the Libyan rebels appealed to the imperialists from the outset!

An article in the ISO's *International Socialist Review* (May-June 2011), titled "Libya's Revolution, U.S. Intervention, and the Left," attempted to explain, pointing to other cases, "where the representatives of a just struggle *do* transform their relationship with imperialism into one of dependence." As an example, the article points to the *mujahedin* who were bankrolled by Washington to kill Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan. The ISO claims that what began as "a mass popular uprising against the Soviet occupation became, under the tutelage of the CIA, Saudi Arabia, and the Pakistani security services, a proxy army in the U.S.'s Cold War against the USSR."

Contrary to this self-serving rewrite of history, the CIA was funneling millions to the *mujahedin* well before the intervention of the Red Army in late 1979. When the modernizing, Soviet-allied People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) government attempted to introduce reforms that prohibited forced marriages and allowed girls to learn to read and write, the mullahs launched a "holy war" with U.S. support. The Soviet intervention, which came after repeated requests by the beleaguered PDPA regime, was on the side of these reforms and opened the possibility of liberation for the benighted peoples of Afghanistan, particularly women. The entry of the Soviet Army also served to defend the USSR's southern borders. We said: Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!

The ISO, like many other putative leftists, stood on the other side—with the forces of Islamic reaction backed by the CIA as part of the imperialist drive to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state. And the Islamic fundamentalists and their imperialist sponsors (and leftist cheerleaders) were successful. The withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1988-89—a treacherous act by the Kremlin Stalinists who vainly sought to appease the imperialists—foreshadowed the final undoing of the Soviet Union itself. The ISO anti-Communists cheered:

> "Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs."
>
> —*Socialist Worker*, May 1988

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR, the world's first workers state, in 1991-92 removed what had been the main impediment to the depredations of the imperialists, who have since been emboldened in running roughshod over the planet.

The barbarism in Libya should steel the resolve of all fighters for the liberation of humanity from exploitation, racism and war to sweep away the rotting capitalist system worldwide. The imperialist subjugation of neocolonial Libya comes together with the escalating war on the livelihoods and very lives of the working class and poor "at home." The global economic crisis, the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s, demonstrates yet again that this is indeed the epoch of capitalism's death agony. When the workers, led by revolutionary vanguard parties, have taken power in the U.S. and elsewhere through victorious socialist revolutions, workers tribunals will put the imperialists and their lackeys on trial for their countless crimes against the working people and oppressed masses of the world. ■

# Thailand...

*(continued from page 3)*

Thai society, form a large majority of heavily exploited factory workers. Millions of workers in Thailand barely eke out an existence, with immigrant workers from Burma, Laos and Cambodia facing the worst conditions of all.

It is necessary to struggle for the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution. In countries of belated capitalist development, such as Thailand, the democratic aspirations of the masses can only he met through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The conquest of power by the proletariat, with the support of the poor and landless peasant masses, can only be consolidated through extending the revolution internationally, particularly to the advanced capitalist countries. This perspective requires building a Leninist-Trotskyist party to mobilise the proletariat, standing as a tribune of the people, against all wings of the Thai bourgeoisie in the struggle to overthrow the exploitative capitalist system through socialist revolution. For a workers and peasants government in Thailand!

### Cliffite Drummer Boys for Imperialism

Ungpakorn broadcast his unprincipled call for a vote to Pheu Thai in a 15 June post on his website:

> "Normally, no socialists should ever call for a vote for a capitalist party in any election. To do so would risk making the kind of mistakes that the Stalinists used to make when they adopted the Popular Front strategy, building alliances with the bourgeoisie and making anti-working class concessions. But it is my opinion, that in the coming general election in Thailand, socialists have no choice but to call for a vote for the Peua Thai Party. Peua Thai is a thoroughly capitalist party."

Ungpakorn talks of socialist principles only to trample on them. It takes some *chutzpah* for him to lecture against the Stalinists' popular-front strategy...while peddling the same kind of class-collaborationist betrayal. The call for a vote to Pheu Thai, contrary to Ungpakorn's cynical disclaimer that "We make no concessions to Peua Thai in doing so," only serves to tie workers and the oppressed to the brutal Tbai bourgeoisie. The deadly consequences of such class collaboration were played out in Indonesia in 1965-66 with the military-led massacre of more than a million Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese. This catastrophe was a direct product of the support by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to the capitalist government of the "progressive" Sukarno. Politically disarmed by the PKI's "joint unity" course, the proletariat was unable to defend itself when the generals, backed by imperialism, struck to behead the PKI.

Of course, supporting bourgeois forces in elections is nothing new for the Cliffite International Socialists and its offshoots. It flows from their reformist program of working within the bounds of capitalism. In Australia, the competing Cliffite groups, Solidarity and Socialist Alternative, repeatedly call on workers to vote for the small-time capitalist Greens party, especially in order to pressure the Australian Labor Party. Grotesquely, a leader of the Zimbabwean Cliffites was elected to parliament in 2000 as a representative of the right-wing, pro-imperialist bourgeois party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and the group supported the MDC leader in the 2002 presidential elections.

Daniel Cuthbert

**Women textile workers in Mae Sot, Thailand.**

It is also no accident that Ungpakorn should call for political support to a representative of the viciously anti-communist Thai bourgeoisie, whose state has served as a bastion of counterrevolutionary terror within southeast Asia and which today plays an· integral role in the U.S.-led imperialist military encirclement of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. In fact Ungpakorn's support to PT is in line with his reformist claptrap that capitalist Thailand needs "economic Democracy where the people decide on investment and production. This is the true Democracy of Socialism. It is a million miles from the Stalinist dictatorships of North Korea, China, Laos, Vietnam or Cuba" ("The Red-Yellow Class Struggle for Democracy," 20 January).

Here, Ungpakorn stands firmly in the anti-Communist traditions of the Cliff tendency, which began in Britain in 1950 with the late Tony Cliff and his followers, renegades from Trotskyism. Ensconced in the British Labour Party, and bowing to the pressures of Cold War I hysteria, Cliff and his supporters capitulated to British imperialism and refused to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialist attack during the Korean War. The "theoretical" justification for adopting this pro-imperialist program was Cliff's claim that the Soviet Union, which at the time was a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, had become "state capitalist" some 20 years earlier.

Ever since, the Cliff tendency has been a loyal servant of capitalist democracy and an anti-Marxist opponent of the revolutionary workers movement and all those countries where capitalism has been overthrown. Throughout the anti-Soviet Cold War II 1980s they stood with the imperialists against the Soviet Union. They sided with the woman-hating, CIA-funded Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* cutthroats against the liberating forces of the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan and championed the anti-Semitic, anti-abortion reactionary Solidarność—the chosen instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland. They celebrated the Yeltsin/Bush capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which ushered in mass unemployment, starvation and nationalist fratricide. Today they back the imperialists' counterrevolutionary drive against China and the remaining deformed workers states.

The overturn of capitalism in China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos are victories for the world's working masses. However, in the absence of the working class fighting as a contender for power in its own name under the leadership of a revolutionary, internationalist party, these overturns resulted in bureaucratically deformed workers states. Resting atop the collectivised property forms are parasitic, nationalist regimes similar to the Stalinist bureaucratic caste in the former Soviet Union, which usurped political power from the working class in a political counterrevolution in 1923-24. Just as we defended the Soviet degenerated workers state, the ICL stands for the unconditional military defence of the remaining deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution despite the bureaucratic misleaders who undermine the social overturns and are an obstacle to their international extension. We fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies and establish governments based on genuine workers councils and an internationalist program. This requires forging Leninist-Trotskyist parties.

Workers in Thailand must be won to the defence of the remaining deformed workers states if they are to successfully liberate themselves from the capitalist rulers. Fighting for a socialist federation of southeast Asia, and linked to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist heartlands, the creation of a workers and peasants government in Thailand would reverberate throughout the region and beyond. Our model is the October 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, which established the world's first workers state and was a beacon for the oppressed around the world. For new October Revolutions! For world socialist revolution!■

# West Papua...

*(continued from page 12)*

alliance with the Indonesian regime. This is not just to secure the flow of profits from Indonesia. For the U.S., the Indonesian armed forces serve as part of the military encirclement of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, which the imperialists seek to destroy by one means or another.

Not surprisingly, the Freeport strike has galvanized support from long-suffering West Papuan independence fighters. For decades, the Indonesian bourgeoisie, centered on the island of Java, has ruled over myriad oppressed nationalities through military terror with the backing of their imperialist masters. This is the case not least in West Papua, the western half of the island of New Guinea, where abuses include forced removal of villages and massacres by military and police personnel. Just three days ago, military and police forces dispersed several thousand delegates to the Third Papuan People's Congress after they declared independence from Jakarta. Up to six people were killed. Activists were savagely beaten and 800 were arrested. While many were subsequently released, those still in detention face charges including treason and rebellion, which can carry sentences of up to 20 years in prison. Indonesian troops out of West Papua now! U.S., Australia: Hands off!

Resistance to Freeport's exploitation of local workers and plunder of natural resources has long been intertwined with the struggles of the West Papuan independence movement. In 1962, the Dutch colonizers ceded West Papua to the Indonesian bourgeois-nationalist regime of Sukarno under the so-called New York Agreement, which was overseen by Washington. While the deal supposedly obligated Jakarta to conduct an election on self-determination no later than 1969, the military, once it was in control, acted to repress any political dissent.

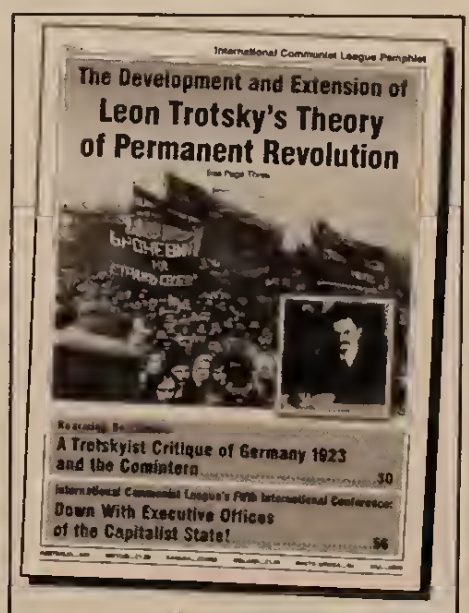
In 1965-66, the butcher Suharto and his military henchmen, aided by the U.S. and Australian imperialists, rose to power through the crushing of the powerful Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Over a million Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese were slaughtered—a direct result of the PKI's treacherous class-collaborationist alliance with Sukarno (see "Lessons of Indonesia 1965," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). Suharto quickly moved to open up the Indonesian economy to greater Western imperialist investment. It was in this context of blood-drenched repression that Freeport's first contract with the Indonesian government was signed in 1967.

Two years later came the farcical referendum on West Papua's independence, conducted under the title "Act of Free Choice." Some 1,000 hand-picked tribal leaders were told by the military to vote for Indonesian rule or have their tongues cut out, guaranteeing the outcome: 100 percent "support" to West Papua's incorporation into Indonesia. Australia's rulers, worried about instability spreading across the border to what was then their Papua New Guinea colony, played a leading role in having the "Act of Free Choice" accepted without debate at the United Nations in November 1969.

As with the mines and plantations in Papua New Guinea, the Freeport mine operations combine savage exploitation with racial subjugation. While Freeport reaps fabulous profits, the West Papuan people remain in dire poverty, with AIDS rapidly spreading and the mortality rate for women and children the highest in Indonesia. Schools are empty much of the time, as teachers are subjected to wretched living conditions and children are too poor to travel long distances or purchase the books they need.

In the Indonesian prison house of peoples, the fight to emancipate the deeply exploited working class is bound up with the struggles of the oppressed minority peoples, from West Papua in the east to Aceh in the far northwest of Sumatra, and of women and the rural poor. In dependent countries such as Indonesia, where the capitalist rulers are thoroughly tied to the imperialists, only a socialist revolution establishing the dictatorship of the workers, leaning on the poor peasantry, can satisfy the basic needs of the masses: freedom from imperialist subjugation, agrarian revolution, liberation for oppressed national minorities, social equality for women, alleviation of poverty. To prevent its strangulation by imperialism, overcome the backwardness of the society and lay the basis for developing toward socialism, a proletarian revolution in Indonesia must be extended internationally to the advanced capitalist countries in Europe, Australia, Japan and the United States.

This is the perspective of permanent revolution, as developed by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. To successfully lead the workers in this fight requires the building of a revolutionary workers party, an Indonesian section of a reforged Fourth International. ■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WORKERS VANGUARD

## West Papua, Indonesia

Reuters

AFP

**October 10: On day that workers on strike at Freeport-McMoRan's Grasberg mine demonstrated in Timika (left), Indonesian riot cops fired on strikers, killing one and injuring more than a dozen (right).**

# Strikers in Bloody Clash with U.S. Mining Giant

OCTOBER 22—For more than a month, some 10,000 workers at the giant Freeport-McMoRan Grasberg gold and copper mine in West Papua have been engaged in a hard-fought and increasingly bitter strike for higher wages and better conditions against the company's local subsidiary, PT Freeport Indonesia. On October 10, when more than 1,000 angry workers marched toward buses carrying scab labor, Indonesian police opened fire, killing one worker and injuring others, including one striker who reportedly died five days later. Working in dangerous conditions, with some miners toiling up to two and a half miles underground, the mostly indigenous Melanesian workforce is paid as little as $1.50 to $3 an hour, the lowest pay at any Freeport mining facility in the world. Leaders of the Trade Union of Chemical, Energy and Mine Workers have extended the strike until November 15.

West Papua is a literal gold mine for the likes of the U.S.-based Freeport-McMoRan and a living hell for the populace, not least the Grasberg miners. A September 26 statement by the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) calls for "solidarity and support of all miners and all trade unions in mining and other industrial sectors," including messages of support to the PT Freeport Indonesian Workers Union. But it will take more than paper messages of support for the Grasberg miners to win this battle. It is in the interests of workers internationally to come to the defense of the Grasberg strikers, including by refusing to handle scab product.

Freeport-McMoRan is one of the largest mining companies in the world, raking in a profit of $1.37 billion in the second quarter of 2011. On September 29, more than 1,200 workers at the Freeport-McMoRan Cerro Verde copper and molybdenum mine in Peru also launched a strike for wage increases. U.S. workers have their own history of battling against this mining conglomerate. Freeport's West Papuan mine is a joint venture with Rio Tinto, which last year locked out International Longshore and Warehouse Union members at its U.S. Borax mine in Boron, California, in a failed attempt to bust the union (see "ILWU: Don't Handle Scab Borax!" *WV* No. 956, 9 April 2010). In 2007, Freeport merged with Phelps Dodge, which from 1983 to 1986 waged a vicious war at its Morenci, Arizona, copper mine to drive out the United Steelworkers union, whose membership was mainly Latino and Native American.

The Freeport miners are seeking not just a wage increase but also conditions and facilities for local workers equal to those of foreign workers at Grasberg, including housing, health care, education and pension funds. The Freeport bosses arrogantly dismissed strikers' demands for a wage increase of $12 to $37.50 an hour as "unrealistic" and began running the Grasberg mine with scabs. The union has since pared back the pay demand to a five-fold increase. At the same time, Freeport was forced to stop production this week after a pipe carrying gold and copper concentrate from the mine to the company's port facility was severed. With a workers' blockade cutting off access to the mine, the company has been ramping up its intimidation and repression, with 500 to 600 cops mobilized against the strikers.

Over the years, Freeport has paid tens of millions of dollars to the military and police to ensure its continued ability to exploit West Papuan labor. "There is no alternative to our reliance on the Indonesian military and police," the company told the *New York Times* (27 December 2005). "The need for this security, the support provided for such security, and the procedures governing such support, as well as decisions regarding our relationships with the Indonesian government and its security institutions, are ordinary business activities." The company has also engaged the security firm G4S (formerly Securicor) to help break the strike. This outfit, which operates prisons and detention centers around the world, is known in Australia for its viciously brutal treatment of Aborigines and refugees.

Striking Grasberg miners have been threatened with dismissal, and the company has been "isolating union leaders from workers by posting security guards around them," according to an ICEM report. On September 11, the chief negotiator of the All Indonesia Workers Union Freeport Division was shot at by "persons unknown." In West Papua, this is often code for the Indonesian military (TNI) and its Kopassus special forces, which are notorious for their torture and murder of perceived opponents of Indonesia's capitalist rulers.

With its enormous gold, copper and oil reserves, West Papua is a place of brutal superexploitation, where largely tribal subsistence farmers have been driven off their land without compensation. Freeport Indonesia is the largest single taxpayer to the Indonesian government, contributing billions of dollars a year. While the comprador Indonesian capitalists, corrupt governmental bodies and TNI all take their cut of the profits, mining conglomerates like Freeport take the lion's share, exploiting cheap labor and ripping out resources under the protection of the imperialist-funded military. Along with its Australian junior imperialist partner, the U.S. has been rebuilding its military

*continued on page 11*

Reuters

**Freeport-McMoRan's giant Grasberg gold and copper mine.**

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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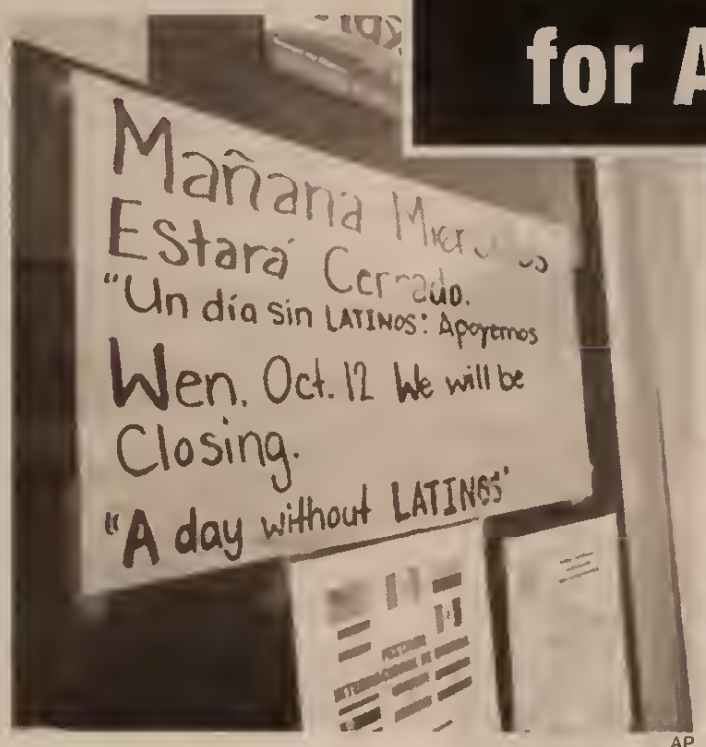
No. 990

11 November 2011


# Racist Alabama Law Drives Out Latino Workers

## Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!




AP

Conn/Huntsville Times

**Left: Store closed as part of protest against draconian Alabama anti-immigrant law, October 12. Right: Protesters gather on October 16 in front of courthouse in Athens, Alabama.**

A new anti-immigrant law has taken effect in Alabama, striking fear into the state's small Latino community—citizens, documented and undocumented immigrants alike. With even harsher provisions than Arizona's infamous SB 1070 and a similar measure in Georgia, the Alabama law empowers police to question and detain anyone suspected of being "foreign" and forces schools to track their students' immigration status. It also imposes new restrictions on immigrants' ability to sign contracts, threatening their access to housing and utilities. Enacted under Republican governor Robert Bentley, the law took effect on September 29 after most of its provisions were upheld by U.S. District Judge Sharon Lovelace Blackburn.

In response, Latinos have fled the state or hunkered down at home, afraid to report to work, let their kids attend school or even make a run to the grocery store. A taxi driver in Birmingham told investigators from the American Civil Liberties Union that people have asked him to drive them as far as New York and Indiana, likening these trips to the Underground Railroad that took escaped black slaves "up North" to freedom ("ACLU Report from Alabama," 11 October). A tomato farmer in north Alabama told Fox News that only eight of the 48 Hispanic workers she needed for the harvest showed up after the law took effect and that she and her husband were shopping for them because they feared arrest. Meanwhile, many parents have rushed to draw up powers of attorney designating guardianship of their kids who were born here and have U.S. citizenship should the parents be jailed or deported.

Latino immigrants and their supporters have tried to fight back. At least six poultry plants in northeast Alabama shut down or scaled back operations on October 12, which had been declared a "*Día sin Latinos*" (Day Without Latinos). Organized principally through *La Jefa* radio, the protest by poultry workers coincided with the closing of Latino-owned restaurants and a school boycott.

On October 14, an emergency stay by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals blocked the checking of student status at enrollment and the provision of the law that made it a crime for immigrants not to carry proof of legal status. But the limited, temporary stay has done little to mitigate the sweeping criminalization of immigrants in Alabama.

Combined with the spectacle of the Republican presidential candidates' debates, where Mitt Romney, Rick Perry et al. bait each other on who's "soft" on immigrants, the new laws passed by Republican state legislatures no doubt serve to reinforce illusions that the Democratic Party is the "friend" of immigrants. But the biggest enforcer of anti-immigrant repression is the federal government under Democrat Barack Obama, who took office soon after the outbreak of the world capitalist economic crisis. In mid October, immigration officials announced that they had deported just under 400,000 people over the last year—a record number for a single year. This is largely due to the Obama administration's drastic expansion of the "Secure Communities" program initiated by George W. Bush. Under this federal dragnet, all those jailed, no matter how minor the alleged crime, have their fingerprints checked against FBI criminal databases and Homeland Security immigration records for possible deportation or detention.

Just as immigrant workers are brought in during economic boom times to provide a pool of low-wage labor, the current anti-immigrant crackdown is at bottom a product of the economic depression, as the capitalists have less need for such labor. This is not new: mass deportations were also launched during the Great Depression of the 1930s under both Republican Herbert Hoover and his successor, liberal icon Franklin D. Roosevelt. The capitalists everywhere seek to inflame racial, national, religious and other tensions in order to divide the working class and weaken its struggles against exploitation. Today, attacks on immigrants go hand in hand with brutal austerity measures being enforced against the entire working people.

Defense of immigrants is of vital interest for the labor movement and all fighters against racist discrimination. The Spartacist League calls for ***full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*** Anyone who got to this country should have the same rights as the native-born, including the right to hold a passport, which would allow them to travel to their home countries and back. As Marxist opponents of capitalist class rule, we do not seek to advise the bourgeoisie on its immigration policy or to offer reforms to "clean up" its enforcement techniques. We fight for workers revolution that will replace the crisis-ridden capitalist profit system with a planned economy on a world scale, in which the workers in power will worry about the ebbs and flows of labor migration and the world economy more generally.

In Alabama, nativist hatred of "foreigners" is intertwined with the state's history as the heart of the slaveholders' Confederacy and later a bulwark of Jim Crow segregation. With farmers howling about the loss of labor as immigrant workers are driven away, Alabama has announced that it will take a page from that history for a solution: the use of prison labor to work in the fields. Already in Idaho, convicts have been put to work picking, sorting and packing potatoes, and similar programs are in place in Arizona and elsewhere. Even the *Wall Street Journal* (18 October) felt compelled to point out that "convict labor has a dark history in America, notoriously in the post-Civil War South, when thousands of African-Americans endured what historians say was a kind of de facto enslavement as prisoners on chain gangs." In Alabama in 1908, the state government sent convicts to work in coal mines owned by U.S. Steel in order to break a strike by thousands of black and white members of the United Mine Workers.

The link between the struggles for immigrant rights and black rights is today glaringly evident in Alabama. Writing in the *Washington Examiner* (21 August), Wade Henderson, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, noted that the Alabama law "seeks to frighten undocumented immigrants into leaving

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**Recollections of a Participant**

**From 1960s New Left to Trotskyism.....Page 4**

# Revolution and Counterrevolution in Russia

## The 20th Anniversary of the Bolshevik Uprising and the Degeneration of the Soviet Power

**By Max Shachtman**
***New International*, January 1938**

To mark the 94th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia, we reprint an excerpt from a 1938 article published in the American Trotskyist journal *New International* (January 1938). On 7 November 1917 (25 October 1917 by the Julian calendar in use in Russia at the time), the working class, led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, seized power in Russia, thus far the greatest historical victory for the proletariat. Overthrowing capitalist rule, the new workers state, based on workers' and peasants' soviets (councils), handed the landed estates to the peasantry and declared an immediate end to the country's involvement in the interimperialist slaughter of World War I. The October Revolution acted as a beacon for all the world's exploited and oppressed, who saw in Soviet Russia the promise of their own liberation.

Dedicated to the construction of an international socialist society, the Bolsheviks saw theirs as the first in a chain of workers revolutions that would have to extend to the main imperialist centers. However, the Soviet workers state remained isolated due mainly to the failure of newly fledged Communist parties to consummate proletarian revolutions elsewhere despite opportunities to do so, crucially in Germany in 1923. In Russia, which was emerging from deep backwardness inherited from tsarism and the devastating effects of imperialist war and civil war, a bureaucratic caste centered on J.V. Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat beginning in 1923-24. This was the political counterrevolution referred to in the headline of the article.

Of the sections of Max Shachtman's article that we are not including below, the bulk deal with the degeneration and bureaucratization of the Bolshevik Party, the trade unions and the soviets under Stalin's rule. Leon Trotsky's 1936 work *The Revolution Betrayed* elaborated a Marxist analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union. The Stalinist bureaucracy threw overboard the Bolsheviks' revolutionary internationalism, adopting the anti-Marxist program of "socialism in one country" with its inevitable corollary of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. The counterrevolutionary content of this program was graphically demonstrated in the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, when, as Shachtman noted, the Stalinists' efforts were "directed towards crushing the proletarian revolution in Spain, preserving Spanish bourgeois democracy as an instrument in the hands of Anglo-French imperialism."

A central purpose of Shachtman's article was to argue against those in the workers movement who claimed that there was nothing left to defend in the Soviet Union because of the crimes of Stalinism. But only a year and a half later, Shachtman himself abandoned unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against the capitalist class enemy as the pressure of impending world war intensified. This was precipitated by Shachtman's capitulation to petty-bourgeois public opinion following the signing of the 1939 pact between the USSR and Nazi Germany. In 1940, Shachtman along with other leading cadre, notably James Burnham and Martin Abern, split from the Socialist Workers Party, the U.S. Trotskyist party. Eight years later, he definitively turned his back on Trotsky's Fourth International.

In continuity with the program outlined in Shachtman's article, the International Communist League fought to the end in defense of the gains of October. We opposed the forces of capitalist counterrevolution from Poland to East Germany and in the Soviet Union itself and fought for proletarian political revolution against the parasitic Stalinist regimes. Today we uphold this program in regard to the remaining countries where capitalist rule was overturned: the deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos. Our Trotskyist defensism is integral to the struggle to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ***For new October Revolutions!***

RGAKFD

Basil Blackwell Inc.

**Above: Red Army soldiers celebrate first anniversary of Russian Revolution under banner hailing Communism, Moscow, 1918. Below: Exiled Soviet Left Oppositionists in Siberia in 1928 hold banner (center) proclaiming "Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."**

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What remains of the Russian revolution? Why should we defend the Soviet Union in case of war?

A number of realities still remain. The conflict between German fascism (and fundamentally, also, of the capitalist world as a whole), and the Soviet Union, still remains no less a reality than, let us say, the conflict between fascism and social-democracy or the trade unions, regardless of how corrupt may be the leadership of the latter, regardless of how it may compromise and capitulate, regardless of how much it may seek to place itself under the protection of one capitalist force (as did the Austrian social democracy) against another. The conflict can be resolved only by the capitalist world being overturned by the working class, or by the Soviet Union, its present bureaucracy included, being crushed and reduced to the status of a colonial or semi-colonial country, divided among the world's imperialist bandits.

Another great reality is the economic foundation established by the October revolution. Despite bureaucratic mismanagement and parasitism, we have the prodigious economic advances made by Soviet industry, the great expansion of the productive forces in Russia (without which human progress is generally inconceivable) in a period of stagnation and retrogression in the capitalist world, the principle and practise of economic planning. All these were possible only on the basis of the abolition of socially-operated private property, of the nationalization of the means of production and exchange, their centralization in the hands of the state which is the main prerequisite of an evolution towards the classless society of universal abundance, leisure and unprecedented cultural advancement.

Outraged by the brutality of the reactionary usurpers, by their blood purges, by their political expropriation of the toilers, by their totalitarian régime, more than one class conscious worker and revolutionary militant has concluded that nothing is left of the Russian revolution, that there are no more grounds for defending the Soviet Union in a war than for defending any capitalist state. The professional confusionists of the various ultra-leftist grouplets prey upon these honest reactions to Stalinism and try to goad the workers into a reactionary position. Some of these philosophers of ignorance and superficiality prescribe a position of neutrality in a war between the Soviet Union and Germany; others, less timid, call for the strategy of defeatism in the Soviet Union. At bottom, the ultra-leftist position on the Soviet Union, which denies it any claim whatsoever to being a workers' state, reflects the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, their inability to make a firm choice between the camps of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, of revolution and imperialism.

Class rule is based upon property relations. Bourgeois class rule, the bourgeois state, is based upon private ownership, appropriation and accumulation. The political superstructure of the bourgeois class state may vary: democratic republic, monarchy, fascist dictatorship. When the bourgeois can no longer rule directly politically, and the working class is still too weak to take power, a Bonapartist military dictatorship may arise which seeks to raise itself "above the classes," to "mediate" between them. But it continues to rule over a ***bourgeois state*** (even though, as in Germany, it has politically expropriated the bourgeoisie and its parties), because it has left bourgeois property relations more or less intact.

The October revolution abolished bourgeois property relations in the decisive spheres of economic life. By centralizing the means of production in the hands of the state, it created new property relations. The counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, although it has destroyed the political rule of the proletariat, has *not*

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# Baltimore: Racist Abuse Disguised as Research

Getty

# Johns Hopkins' Lead Poisoning Experiment on Black Kids

Ericka Grimes was one year old when researchers from Baltimore's Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI), a prestigious medical facility affiliated with Johns Hopkins University, knowingly exposed her to dangerous levels of lead. As part of its 1993 "Lead-Based Paint Abatement and Repair and Maintenance Study," KKI kept her in a decrepit house encrusted with crumbling, peeling lead paint. Five months later, the lead in Ericka's blood had tripled to a level considered "highly elevated" by medical authorities. Ericka was among scores of black children who were harmed by the KKI study, which was funded by the federal government. Children of her age who ingest lead paint chips or dust can develop learning disabilities, impaired hearing and permanent brain damage.

The stated objective of the study was to help "preserve availability of low-rent urban housing that might be abandoned by landlords if they had to pay for the expensive repairs needed to eliminate lead using standard abatement methods"—in other words, to save slumlords some cash. It was already well known that the risk of childhood lead poisoning could be practically eliminated by a thorough lead abatement, not to speak of replacing the crumbling ghetto buildings with new, lead-free housing. What the study intended to figure out was how much landlords could skimp on repairs before the children ended up with brain damage.

KKI claims that the study was ultimately beneficial to the city of Baltimore because it helped bring about a large drop in new lead-poisoning cases. To get those results, KKI acted with racist contempt for the children, using them as human guinea pigs. KKI encouraged landlords to rent to families with young children and lured unwitting parents with toys, food stamps and money. Researchers periodically took blood samples from the children and identified lead-infested hot spots in the houses but hid the danger from the parents.

The children with elevated blood lead levels did not receive any medical treatment. Indeed, treating them, which should have begun by providing the families with decent homes, would have vitiated the study, the whole point of which was to measure the rising levels of lead in the children's blood. As noted in a class-action lawsuit filed on September 15, KKI, an internationally renowned facility specializing in childhood brain disorders, intentionally treated poor black children like "canaries in the mines."

The lawsuit was made possible by a 2001 Maryland Court of Appeals ruling that overturned previous court decisions protecting KKI from legal action. The ruling sent shock waves through the public health establishment by concluding that no child in Maryland could be included in a "non-therapeutic study that promises no medical benefit to the child." The court decision noted that if children were involved in such a study, "any balance between risk and benefit is necessarily negative."

The decision compared the lead-poisoning study to Nazi experiments carried out in the Buchenwald concentration camp, U.S. government radiation experiments on soldiers in the 1940s and '50s and the infamous "Tuskegee experiment." In the "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male," the U.S. Public Health Service recruited hundreds of black men with syphilis in Macon County, Alabama, and watched them die slow, agonizing, yet preventable deaths. For 40 years, the government withheld treatment from the men, even when penicillin became available as an effective treatment for syphilis. The "study" ended in 1972 only because it was exposed in the press, igniting a firestorm of public outrage over its racism and cruelty. By then, more than 100 of the men had already died of the disease and its complications.

In the case of the radiation studies cited by the court, the government sent no fewer than 200,000 American soldiers into irradiated test sites within minutes after atomic bombs were set off. The tests came on the heels of the 1945 incineration of 200,000 Japanese civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by U.S. atomic bombs. That horrendous war crime and the later studies were carried out as part of the massive effort to develop and test nuclear weapons for use against the Soviet Union (see "U.S. Irradiated Thousands in Atomic Experiments," *WV* No. 594, 18 February 1994).

In fact, the radiation experiments went far beyond the exposure of soldiers to nuclear fallout. In hospitals, schools and other institutions across the U.S., unsuspecting pregnant women, children and others were exposed to massive amounts of X-rays, injected with radioactive isotopes and made to eat food laced with radioactive carcinogens. These and many other atrocities, which lasted until the 1970s, are chronicled in *The Plutonium Files: America's Secret Medical Experiments in the Cold War* (1999), written by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Eileen Welsome. Johns Hopkins was among the universities and hospitals cited by Welsome that carried out the experiments.

## Medical Research and Racist Contempt

For generations, black oral history has featured "night doctors" who abduct children for gruesome experiments. These stories are not entirely irrational. The KKI experiment is not an aberration. Indeed, there is a long history of such atrocities in this capitalist society, which was founded on black chattel slavery and continues to brand black people for life by the color of their skin. From the horrors of the Middle Passage and the bartering in human flesh to the noose of the lynch rope and rampant racist cop terror, the oppression of black people in the U.S. has been marked by systematic degradation and cruelty.

In the slaveholders' South, slaves were sometimes rented or purchased for the sole purpose of medical experimentation. Thomas Jefferson experimented with smallpox vaccine on his slaves. In the 1840s, James Marion Sims—venerated as a benefactor of women and the "father of gynecology" for pioneering fistula repair, among other contributions—performed scores of operations on the genitals of female slaves without anesthesia. Sims refused to administer the anesthetic ether, claiming that blacks felt less pain than whites—a lie long favored by slavery's apologists.

The imprint of slavery, Jim Crow segregation and the continuing oppression of black people is reflected in the race and class bias permeating the KKI study. Johns Hopkins Medicine includes a state-of-the-art hospital whose renowned doctors and medical advances attract patients and students from around the world. It also provides medical services for poor people in Baltimore—a mainly black, once heavily industrialized city whose unemployment, decay and racist police brutality were poignantly captured in the HBO TV series *The Wire*. Yet the lead-poisoning experiment was one of a long list of racist abuses carried out by this respected institution.

As part of a federally funded study, in 2000 Johns Hopkins researchers spread sludge fertilizer made from human and industrial waste on lawns in black neighborhoods. According to a 2008 Associated Press exposé, researchers argued that the iron and phosphates in the fertilizer could prevent lead from being absorbed by children playing in the yard who get soil in their mouths. (Proper soil abatement involves installing an impermeable barrier or replacing topsoil with uncontaminated soil. But landlords want to avoid such costly measures.) Families were assured of the safety of the sludge and were never told about the harmful effects if their kids ingested it.

An example of the disdainful treatment Johns Hopkins has meted out to its black patients is related in Rebecca Skloot's book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010). An impoverished black woman, Lacks was treated for cervical cancer in 1951 at the segregated "colored women" ward at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Without her knowledge, physicians excised tissue from her tumor and proceeded to culture cells from that sample. When Lacks died a few months later, doctors duped her family into performing an autopsy solely to secure more of her tissues for culture.

The many cultures derived from these cells, known by laboratory convention as HeLa, became an unparalleled research tool crucial to a vast amount of biomedical research, from the development of the polio vaccine to mapping the human genome, AIDS research and the development of cloning techniques. HeLa cells are featured in 60,000 scientific papers. But while Henrietta Lacks' cells

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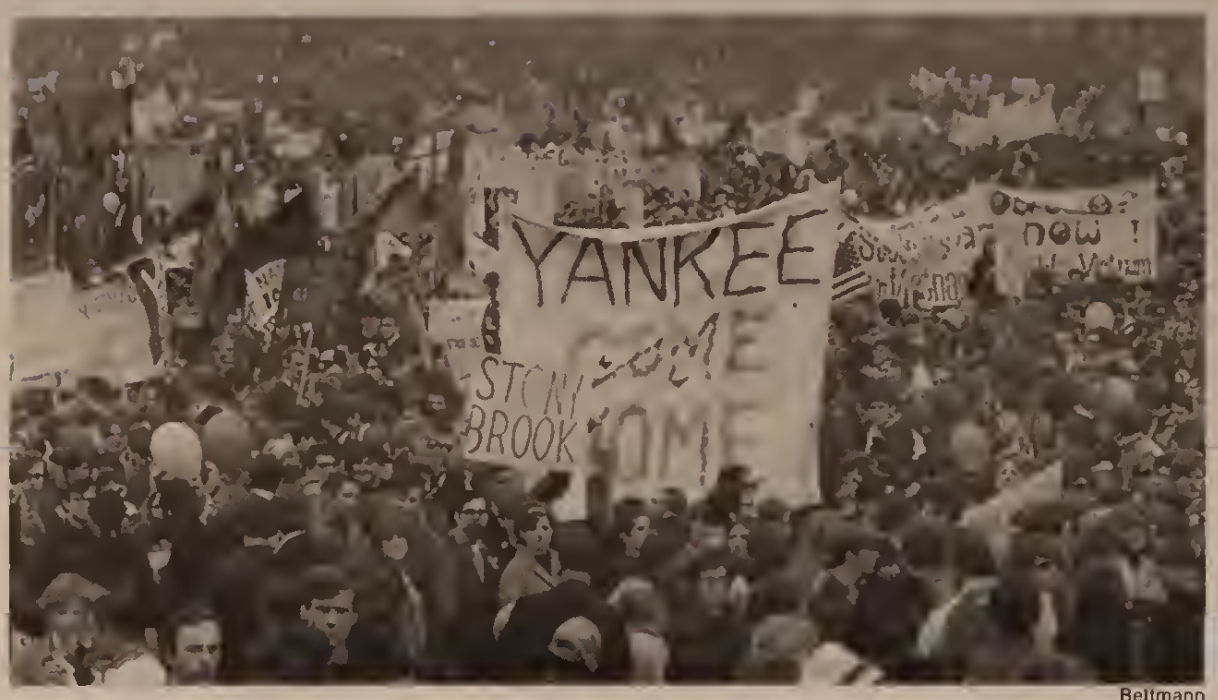
Painting by Robert Thom

Burns Archive

**Left: Dr. J. Marion Sims, considered "father of gynecology," purchased black women slaves for gruesome operations in mid 1800s. Right: Infamous "Tuskegee experiment" of 1932-72 denied penicillin, gave bogus "treatment" to black men with syphilis.**




Beltmann

Spartacist

**Left: 1967 NYC demonstration against Vietnam War. Right: Spartacists put forward revolutionary-internationalist perspective against U.S. imperialism at August 1966 NYC antiwar protest.**

# From 1960s New Left to Trotskyism

## Recollections of a Participant

*We print below the first part of a presentation, slightly edited for publication, by Spartacist League speaker Diana Coleman at an October 15 forum in Los Angeles.*

I've noticed that there is quite a bit of interest in and nostalgia for the activism and struggle of the 1960s. Well, that's understandable. In the last few years, the world has plunged into an economic crisis unrivaled since the days of the Great Depression. The con men on Wall Street whose financial swindles were central to this collapse were bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars by the Democratic Party administration of Barack Obama, following in the steps of George W. Bush. The working class, black people, Latinos and the growing mass of the poor have been made to foot the bill, losing their jobs, homes, pensions and virtually anything else that makes life remotely livable.

*PART ONE*

Every day you read of some new attack on the unions. Every day the fees go up for a college education. U.S. imperialism rampages around the world from Iraq to Afghanistan to Libya, leaving death and destruction in its wake. And particularly here in the U.S., there has been precious little class struggle, social struggle, even student struggle, in response—with the notable exception of the longshore union in Longview, Washington. We are now seeing a little action from these "Occupy Wall Street" protesters, who are basically frustrated young liberals. But the bottom line is: capitalism cannot be reformed. What is needed is a Marxist perspective of international socialist revolution.

What I am going to do today is talk about the 1960s—the last time there was serious social struggle in the U.S.—and why some of us concluded that struggle, even quite militant struggle, is not enough. You need a Marxist working-class perspective and a Leninist vanguard party that can lead the working class forward to seize state power and establish socialized, collectivized property systems around the whole world.

After that long introduction, I'm going to play you an early Phil Ochs song, "I'm Going to Say It Now." This was probably written not long after the 1964 Free Speech Movement (FSM) at UC Berkeley. It has a lot of the themes of that period—alienation, opposition to "in loco parentis," etc. It's a very liberal protest song, but it foreshadows things to come:

> "Oh you've given me a number and
> you've taken off my name,
> To get around this campus why you
> almost need a plane,
> And you're supporting Chang Kai-
> Shek, while I'm supporting Mao.
> So when I've got something to say,
> sir, I'm gonna say it now....
> "I've read of other countries where
> the students take a stand,
> Maybe even help to overthrow the
> leaders of the land
> Now I wouldn't go so far to say
> we're also learnin' how,
> But when I've got something to say,
> sir, I'm gonna say it now."

From the 1960s up to the early '70s, there developed a distinct generation of American leftists whose experiences were quite different from the preceding generation of leftists, whose main experiences were the Great Depression and the labor struggles of the 1930s. This generation called itself the New Left as opposed to the "old left," which had been dominated by the pro-Moscow Stalinist Communist Party (CP). This New Left generation, of which I'm a part, makes up a lot of the cadre and leadership of not only the Spartacist League but also our left opponents: the Progressive Labor Party (PL), Revolutionary Communist Party, International Socialist Organization (ISO), Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and Workers World Party (WWP).

Let me first say a word about the 1950s. What a nasty period—the intensely anti-Communist climate after the Korean War, blacklisting, reds driven out of the unions, the Smith Act trials of CP members, deadening conformity, women forced back into the home after World War II. My parents were in the CP, and I remember when I was seven years old the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, American Communists executed for supposedly betraying the "secret" of the atom bomb to the Soviet Union. When I asked my parents why this was happening, they said it was because the Rosenbergs were "progressives" (a code word for CPers) and Jews. Even then I knew that this described my parents, too. Later, my mother told me that if they, my parents, were arrested, my grandparents would take care of my brother and me. Luckily, it never came to that, but this was my first encounter with the U.S. "justice system," and I never forgot it.

Beltmann

**Jackson, Mississippi, 1963: Courageous civil rights activists sit in at lunch counter to protest Jim Crow segregation.**

### The Left, Old and New

Under the immense pressure of Cold War anti-Communism, the old left—both the reformist CP and the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—suffered major right-wing defections. The SWP lost 20 percent of its membership in the Cochran-Clarke faction fight and the CP lost three-quarters of its membership in 1956-57. These ex-CPers didn't mostly become right-wingers. Rather they mostly became liberals—they had been voting Democrat for years, anyhow. The hard-core Stalinists later became Maoists and influenced the New Left in the late '60s, but I'll get to that later.

These losses were heavily concentrated among the parties' active trade unionists. This purging and defection of reds from the labor movement in the '50s was the single most important negative factor shaping the outlook of what would become the New Left. When young political activists, white and black, entered the political scene during the civil rights movement, they encountered a labor movement with no left wing sharing their views on racial oppression or U.S. militarism. The labor bureaucrats were militant anti-Communists who had gotten their posts by working hand in glove with the government in driving the reds out of the unions and were gung ho for all of U.S. imperialism's dirty wars.

No surprise there, but it was not just the bureaucracy. When I got a union job in the late '60s after the New Left finally became interested in the working class, there wasn't anybody older than me in the unions who had ever been a leftist. So what developed among the New Left was a real petty-bourgeois, anti-working-class elitism. For them, "those workers" were all "bought off" with their high wages, good union jobs, fancy pensions. Today that seems like a joke, but that was the view at the time.

Two things really brought the McCar-

thy period to an end: the civil rights movement and the Cuban Revolution. Castro and Che were not seen as hardline Stalinists. Well, originally they weren't—they were petty-bourgeois nationalists. And, indeed, young would-be leftists often identified with them against the U.S. on a democratic basis of "national liberation" rather than on the basis of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

On the home front, in the American South black people faced legal segregation and were deprived of basic rights—a fact well-publicized by the Soviet Union. The Southern Jim Crow system was based on police/Klan terror against atomized rural sharecroppers, and it had become increasingly outmoded as industrialization in the South around World War II drew blacks into the working class and the Southern cities. By the late 1950s, black anger at Jim Crow segregation had given birth to the civil rights movement, shattering the climate of Cold War McCarthyism and increasingly polarizing American society. It's not as well known, but by the early '60s there were huge demos in the North, too: boycotts of segregated schools, rent strikes against ghetto slumlords, protests against segregated housing and racist police brutality. These culminated in the late '60s in a series of massive ghetto rebellions.

## Radicalization of Civil Rights Militants

The first group I ever joined was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1963-64 in San Francisco. I participated in various mass demos protesting job discrimination against black people—at the Sheraton Palace, at Lucky's (now Albertsons) and on Auto Row. In retrospect, that last one seems kind of weird—for the right of blacks to be car salesmen? But these demos were huge, drawing thousands. The following summer, I decided to go down South for the second Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Freedom Summer. This was the year after civil rights activists Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney had been killed, but being 19 I wasn't as fearful as I probably should have been.

When they tell the official story of the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King was the undisputed leader whom everyone loved and followed. It's not so! King's vaunted nonviolence was really a way of trying to keep the movement liberal, respectable, reformist. His whole strategy was to appeal to the liberal Northern establishment to, please, help out black people. Pressuring the Democrats was to remain King's consistent strategy throughout his life.

Seeking to refurbish its image, the bourgeoisie eventually acquiesced to the demand for legal equality in the South. At the same time, the federal government sought to restrain the most militant elements of the civil rights movement and usually did little to prevent the violent suppression of civil rights activists by Southern authorities, often collaborating in that suppression. This could not help but bring the question of the class nature of the capitalist state, as an organ of repression, to the fore. SNCC was formed under the auspices of MLK's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. After some hard experiences in the South with the cops, Klan and Democrats (who ran the South, after all), SNCC moved to the left, increasingly frustrated with and eventually hostile to the Northern liberal establishment—and King himself.

When I was there in the summer of 1965, the Los Angeles Watts upheaval broke out. Martin Luther King said that "as powerful a police force as possible" should be brought to L.A. to stop it. SNCC activists on my project cursed King for that. SNCC had broken with mainstream liberalism but had not yet definitely latched onto black nationalism. I could see that SNCC was having a total political identity crisis, but I sure didn't have the answers. By this time, I hated the Democrats and was convinced that racial oppression was integral to the capitalist system and wasn't going to go away just because black people could ride at the front of the bus. So I decided I should spend some time in Berkeley checking out the socialist groups.

Beltmann

**18 June 1953: NYC gathering in support of American Communists Julius and Ethel Rosenberg the day before their execution.**

The early years of the 1960s in the South were a key moment. If the SWP, which had been *the* Trotskyist party, had remained a revolutionary party and concentrated its forces in the Southern civil rights movement, it may well have won to Trotskyism a large fraction of those young black militants who eventually became black nationalists. That would have really changed the political scene. But by the early 1960s, the SWP had lost its revolutionary bearings and tailed non-proletarian class forces. Domestically, it abstained from the Southern civil rights movement. Internationally, the SWP was uncritically cheerleading for the petty-bourgeois radical-nationalist leadership of the Cuban Revolution.

Trotskyists should have been calling for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state and, at the same time, calling on the Cuban proletariat to establish a regime of workers democracy by sweeping away the Castroite bureaucracy through a political revolution. But the SWP refused to criticize Castro. These two questions—Cuba and the black question—which had decisively broken open the McCarthy period, were exactly the two questions the SWP couldn't deal with. In the process, they abandoned the centrality of the working class and the necessity of building Trotskyist parties in every country.

It is during this period that the Spartacist League originated as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) opposition within the SWP, fighting on these two questions. In an August 1963 document, "The Negro Struggle and the Crisis of Leadership," the RT wrote: "We must consider nonintervention in the crisis of leadership a crime of the worst sort." After being expelled from the SWP, the small Spartacist forces intervened in the civil rights movement in both the South and North. Look at *Spartacist* Bound Volume No. 1—the SL, founded in 1966, was intervening on the black question all the time and calling on militants to break with the Democratic Party, no less than the Republicans a capitalist party. The call for a Freedom Labor Party was an axis to link the exploding black struggle to the power of labor, North and South. In the mid '60s, Spartacists were arguing the right line but lacked the numbers and, more importantly, the acquired political authority to decisively influence the internal factional struggles in SNCC. So the crucial moment was lost.

## The Rise of Students for a Democratic Society

I could say a lot more about the civil rights movement, but I want to talk about how this massive ferment influenced the student movement. The most organized expression of the New Left was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Of course, that sentence is sort of a contradiction in terms given how deliberately disorganized SDS was: participatory democracy, every chapter going its own way, etc. Restarted in 2006, the new SDS is a liberal campus group that combines parochial campus activism with Democratic Party lesser-evilism. We have an excellent article about SDS headlined "From Tepid Liberalism to Radicalism and Back Again" (*WV* No. 927, 2 January 2009). The original SDS went from liberalism to radicalism; the new group is running the film in reverse.

In well-publicized interviews, leaders of the new SDS push the myth that Communism destroyed the first SDS and call for such leftists to stay out of SDS. WWP and Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) work in SDS anyway, but this says less about SDS's "non-sectarianism" and more about these reformists' toothless politics and their own lesser-evilism. Here in L.A., during the 2008 election we saw FRSO as part of SDS busily holding a "no to McCain" campaign rally at UCLA, which in plain English meant "yes to Obama." The new SDS's "democratic" and "anti-authoritarian" rhetoric recapitulates the Cold War anti-Communism that the first SDS broke from.

The original SDS began as the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the student affiliate of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). Moribund by 1960, the LID had served as a handmaiden of the U.S. government in the left and labor movement. Populated by "State Department socialists," such as Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington, the LID also counted among its members Victor and Walter Reuther—the labor traitors who rode to power in the United Auto Workers by purging Communists from the union in the 1940s—and Sidney Hook. Once close to the CP, Hook turned repentant and became a staunch supporter of American "democracy." Hook was a leading light in the Congress for Cultural Freedom—a CIA-funded operation devoted to counteracting the appeal of Communism and the Soviet Union. These types are the ones for whom the term "CIA socialist" or "State Department socialist" was invented.

But the youth were getting a little restive. In 1960, the Student League for Industrial Democracy changed its name to Students for a Democratic Society and began to grow. In 1962, in response to Kennedy's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba—a failed attempt to overthrow the Cuban Revolution—SDSers posed the question: "Whether our foreign policy had really changed from its old imperialist ways?" Obviously not! The SDS 1962 Port Huron Statement took tiny steps away from anti-Communism, opining that "the American Military response has been more effective in deterring the growth of democracy than communism."

Even these small steps away from McCarthyism were too much for the LID elders, who hauled the SDS leadership into a trial for not being anti-Communist enough, then cut all funds to SDS and changed the locks on the SDS office. I recommend Kirkpatrick Sale's book *SDS* (1973) if you want to know all the details. After much organizational wrangling, SDS and the LID patched things up. Although moving away from the dried-up LID social democrats, SDS had not fundamentally broken from lesser-evil Democratic Party pressure politics, drawing disaffected youth back into the two-party shell game and perpetuating illusions in bourgeois democracy. In the 1964 elections, a wing of SDS campaigned to go "part of the way with LBJ" (a reference to Lyndon Johnson) instead of the official Democratic Party slogan: "All the way with LBJ."

But the times they were a-changin', as the song by Bob Dylan said. In 1964 at UC Berkeley, the Free Speech Movement broke out in response to the administration's attempts to censor political life on campus by barring reds and other civil rights activists ("outside agitators") and restricting the activities of student organizations. What happened was that a young activist from CORE, Jack Weinberg, had set up an unauthorized literature table in Sproul Plaza. For this terrible crime, he was arrested. I will just comment here that considering all the trouble and hassle the SL has these days in setting up literature tables on campuses for our sub drive, one has to conclude that not too much has changed!

Chris Kjobech

**Free Speech Movement protest at UC Berkeley, 1964. FSM was early expression of 1960s student radicalization.**

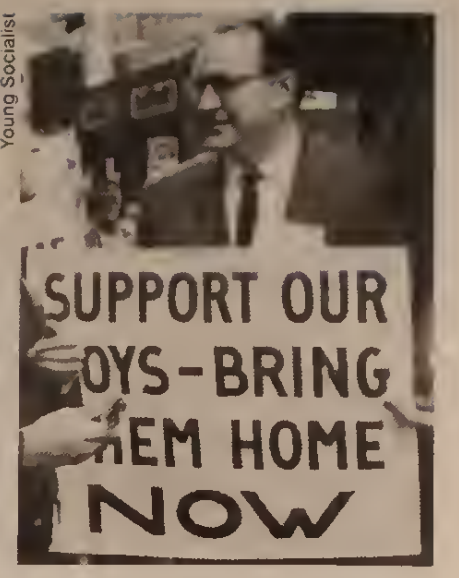
In this case, 3,000 students converged on Sproul Plaza and blocked in the police car. For the next 32 hours, the police car served as an impromptu podium for those defending the right of students to "free speech." Facing reprisals from both the liberal campus administration and Democratic governor Pat Brown—the father of the current governor—FSM activists defended their right to "hear any person speak in any open area of the campus at any time on any subject" (see "The Student Revolt at Berkeley," *Spartacist* No. 4, May-June 1965). The FSM's victory fueled

*continued on page 6*

# New Left...

*(continued from page 5)*

WV Photo




Young Socialist

**Left: SL at 1973 anti-Vietnam War protest in Washington, D.C. Right: SWP honcho Fred Halstead, shown with social-patriotic placard, led assault on PL, SL at 1971 NPAC conference.**

further student radicalization across the country and undermined illusions in the good offices of campus administrations and the Democratic Party.

A funny addendum here: Jack Weinberg, the guy in the police car, was the one who said, "Don't trust anyone over 30." I don't know if right then, but certainly within a few years, he was in the International Socialists (the predecessor to the thoroughly reformist ISO). And by 1984 on the 20th anniversary of the FSM, the *SF Chronicle* reported that Weinberg and Mario Savio, the best-known leader of the FSM, were both registered Democrats. So *they* sure weren't trustworthy when they got older.

### The Impact of the Vietnam War on the Left

Meanwhile, the escalation of the imperialist war in Vietnam meant more youth were being drafted, adding a direct material interest to the moral outrage felt by student activists opposing American imperialist aims. In 1965, SDS initiated the first nationwide protest against the Vietnam War. To many LID liberals, protesting a war against Communism was as bad as supporting the Communists outright. Furthermore, SDS's call for the march included no anti-Communist exclusion clause. With a rush of new members and continued radicalization, SDS would abolish its anti-Communist exclusion clause at its 1965 summer convention, and soon afterward it split from LID entirely.

Now, I didn't go to Berkeley from '64 to '68. Maybe I should have, but when I had to make my choice in '62, Berkeley was politically dead as a doornail. I viewed Berkeley as huge and soulless, so I went to a small liberal arts school in New Mexico instead. But this did give me a sense of how quickly things can change, especially among the petty bourgeoisie. One minute Berkeley was all bouffant hairdos and "frat rats." The next time I went there on summer vacation, it was a hotbed of student activism and everybody looked like a hippie. And the people were all the same, I could see that.

That first SDS-organized national antiwar march took place in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1965. It got 20-25,000 people, which totally amazed SDS. At the invitation of the SDS leaders, the rally was addressed by two liberal U.S. Senators. One of them denounced the "expansionist" policies of Communist China and called for a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. A few years later, it would be inconceivable for SDS to invite Democratic Senators to their antiwar protests, and anyone who spoke of Chinese expansionism would have been booed off the stage.

Let me comment first that many leftists and liberals claim that the Vietnam *antiwar movement* ended the war in Vietnam. No way! The Vietnamese won on the battlefield—that's what ended the war. But this kind of liberal-pacifist antiwar movement has nevertheless become the model for all of the reformist left's subsequent antiwar demos. If you don't believe me, go to any PSL/ANSWER demo, where you will find exactly these same reformist politics.

We stand for the military defense of the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan against the brutal U.S. imperialist occupiers. As revolutionary Marxists, we side with oppressed countries against the predatory imperialist powers. But unlike in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, there was another element at work during the Vietnam War: there was a socially progressive character to those who fought against the imperialist butchers. The heroic Vietnamese had carried out a social revolution, albeit bureaucratically deformed, overturning capitalism in the North, and they were fighting to extend it to the South. We demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces and called for the military defense of the National Liberation Front (NLF) and North Vietnamese forces, raising revolutionary slogans such as "Victory for the Vietnamese Revolution! No negotiations!" and "All Indochina must go Communist!"

### The Split in the Antiwar Movement

As opposition to the war grew, more and more young activists stopped chanting for "peace" and began calling for "Victory to the NLF!" After all, the liberal establishment, including the Democratic president Johnson, backed the imperialist adventure in Vietnam. This drove the radical student movement to the left and opened it to revolutionary politics. Soon those who had been calling for "part of the way with LBJ" were chanting: "Hey, Hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?"

Here is a description of SDS circa 1967 from the novel *Vida* by Marge Piercy, who had been in SDS and is a bourgeois feminist. She refers to the group SAW, but I believe what she is describing is SDS:

> "Every person in SAW had their own politics—anarchist, liberal, communist, democratic-socialist, syndicalist, Catholic-worker, Maoist, Schactmanite [sic], Spartacist—but what mattered was the politics of the act.... Everyone was accommodated in the vast lumbering movement. Vida was content to be of the New Left, without a fancier label. All that hairsplitting—that was what the poor Old Lefties had sat around doing in dreary meetings in the fifties nobody else attended while the resident FBI agent took notes. Now they knew that everything must be done and they must speak to everyone, through the poetry of the act, through the theatre of the streets,... SAW was a fiercely, totally democratic organization, open to anyone with or without the low dues, with an elected leadership usually galloping in one direction while the members marched in another. Chapters did as they pleased and projects happened because enough people did them. Program was hotly debated and then often coldly ignored, unless it really was up from the grass roots. SAW was uncontrollable and lush as a vacant-lot jungle."

Spartacists sporadically intervened into SDS in the mid '60s, and all I can say is I don't envy the comrade trying to do an intervention into that "lush jungle."

Now, there was a left-right split in the antiwar movement just as there had been in the civil rights movement, where MLK had been the right wing. SDS was the left here, and the right wing was the CP and the once-Trotskyist SWP. While the CP continued to preach its class-collaborationist program of electoral support to lesser-evil Democrats, the SWP became the main organizer of peace crawls designed to cater to liberal bourgeois spokesmen—that is, popular-frontist, class-collaborationist formations based on a liberal bourgeois program. One thing that the SWP was adamant on was that these rallies and demos absolutely could not call for the Vietnamese's military victory. Oh no, that would upset the Democrats—so the slogans had to be kept to "Out now" or "Bring our boys home!"

As the war dragged on, there were some Democrats who thought the U.S. was spending too much on napalm and Agent Orange for Vietnam when it should be building its nuclear arsenal to fight the real danger, the Soviet Union. So Democrats became a regular feature of these antiwar rallies. Often these now-antiwar Democrats (bourgeois defeatists) were viciously anti-labor. You can easily imagine how violently anti-Spartacist the SWP would get when the SL called for "Bourgeoisie out of the antiwar movement" and "Labor strikes against the war!"

This came to a head at a 1971 conference in New York City. SL comrades attempted to put forward a motion to exclude ruling-class politicians from the conference. They said, this is an antiwar conference—how can you have representatives of the ruling class that's prosecuting the war? When the SWP would not entertain the motion, our comrades together with supporters of PL and SDS heckled Democratic Senator Vance Hartke during his speech. Comrades chanted, "Labor strikes against the war" when Victor Reuther began his speech. The SL didn't attempt to drive them off the stage or anything like that. In response, the SWP went ballistic and sent their goon squad on a vicious assault against the protesters, some of whom were beaten, with one PL member reportedly thrown through a glass door. Assisting the SWP thugs were the minions of Tim Wohlforth's Workers League, now the Socialist Equality Party.

But it wasn't just the SL versus the SWP. Literally thousands of radicalized students were repelled by the SWP's reformism and pacifism. I came back to the Bay Area in late 1968, and for one of those Spring Mobilizations (in '69 or '70) I heard that New Leftists in Berkeley were setting up an "anti-imperialist coalition" to march in the SWP-initiated peace demo. This sounded great to me. Like many others, I hated the "give peace a chance," liberal, pro-American quality of these demos. I had decided that "our boys" were the ones fighting on the other side, and I was rooting for them. When this anti-imperialist contingent marched up, it looked like the SWP marshals were going to physically exclude us. But I guess that they decided that the contingent was too large and doing so would create too much of a scene.

The SWP sure gave Trotskyism a bad name. I identified Trotskyism with the worst kind of liberal reformism. They were always chanting to keep it "peaceful, legal." My friends and I were chanting, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, the NLF is going to win!" This was a two-edged development, though, because let's be clear that we were calling not only for military but also political support to the Stalinist bureaucracy in Vietnam.

By 1968, SDS had hundreds of campus chapters around the country. There was massive ferment on the campuses, particularly after the student strike, building occupation and massive arrests at Columbia University protesting racism and the Vietnam War in the spring of 1968. In his book, Sale gives a quote from the bourgeois press of this time on SDS:

> "These youngsters, organized in the Students for a Democratic Society, (S.D.S.), are acting out a revolution—not a protest, and not a rebellion, but an honest-to-God revolution. They see themselves as the Che Guevaras of our society, and their intention is to seize control of the university, destroy its present structure, and establish the 'liberated' university as the redoubt from which to storm and overthrow 'bourgeois' America. This is what they say they are doing—they are the least conspiratorial and most candid of revolutionists—and this is what in fact they *are* doing."

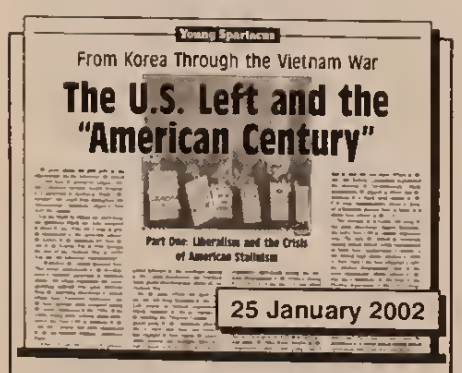
Noting that this gave SDS a whole lot of credit, Sale goes on to say: "The most ardently resistant SDSer couldn't have put it better—and even he wouldn't have been so convinced."

Then there was the Democratic National Convention in fall 1968. Most of the protesters opposed the Democratic Party as a capitalist party presiding over social injustice. As Sale describes, SDS activists rejected "as usual the idea of mass marches but [were] doubly scornful of any project mired in electoral politics." SDS members propagandized and organized actions against the Democratic Party and raised general hell in the city. For that, they were arrested, savagely beaten and one young man was shot to death, all under the aegis of the Democratic Party city administration of the infamous Daley machine. It had a huge impact nationally.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

New Left Notes

**PL-SDS national convention, Chicago, 1970: Spartacists fought for Trotskyist program against PL leadership.**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# Archives...

*(continued from page 2)*

*yet* heen able to restore capitalist property relations by aholishing those established hy the revolution. This great reality determines, for Marxists, the character of the Soviet Union as a workers' state, bureaucratically degenerated, it is true, usurped and therefore crucially imperilled by the Bonapartists, but still fundamentally a workers' state. This great remaining conquest of the revolution determines, in turn, our defense of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack *and* from its Bonapartist sappers at home.

Because it is not a simple question, Lenin pointed out at the 9th Congress of the party in 1920, we must be careful not to sink into the morass of confusion.

> "Wherein consists the rule of the class? Wherein consisted the rule of the bourgeoisie over the feudal lords? In the constitution it was written: 'in freedom and equality.'—That is a lie. So long as there are toilers, the property owners are capable and, as such, even compelled, to speculate. We say that there is no equality there, and that the sated are not the equals of the hungry, the speculator is not the equal of the toiler. Wherein does the rule of the class express itself? The rule of the proletariat expresses itself in the abolition of landed and capitalist property. Even the fundamental content of all former constitutions—the republican included—boiled down to property. Our constitution has acquired the right to historical existence, we did not merely write down on paper that we are abolishing property, but the victorious proletariat did abolish property and abolished it completely.—Therein consists the rule of the class—primarily in the question of property. When the question of property was decided in practise, the rule of the class was thereby assured; thereupon the constitution wrote down on paper what life had decided: 'There is no capitalist and landed property,' and it added: 'The working class has more rights than the peasantry, but the exploiters have no rights at all.'
>
> "Therewith was written down the manner in which we realized the rule of our class, in which we bound together the toilers of all strata, all the little groups. The petty bourgeois proprietors were split-up. Among them those who have a larger property are the foes of those who have less, and the proletariat openly declares war against them when it abolishes property....
>
> "The rule of the class is determined only by the relationship to property. That is precisely what determines the constitution. And our constitution correctly set down our attitude to property and our attitude to the question of what class must stand at the head. He who, in the question of how the rule of the class is expressed, falls into the questions of democratic centralism, as we often observe, brings so much confusion into the matter that he makes impossible any successful work on this ground."
>
> —(*Russische Korrespondenz*, Nr. 10, July 1920, p. 8) [see Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)," March 1920, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30]

Liberal apologists have distorted Lenin's concepts into an argument for the compatibility of the bureaucratic dictatorship, and even a personal dictatorship, with a consistent development towards the new social order. "So long as industry remains nationalized and the productive forces expand," runs their apology, "what does it really matter if Stalin maintains a bureaucratic despotism, which we civilized liberals would not tolerate but which is good enough for backward Russians?" It is of course quite true that Lenin saw no absolute incompatibility between proletarian democracy and "individual dictatorship" in industry under given conditions. A year before his quoted speech at the 9th Congress, he observed:

> "That the dictatorship of single persons in the history of the revolutionary movements was very often the spokesman, the carrier and the executant of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes, is evidenced by the incontestable experience of history.... If we are not anarchists, we must acknowledge the necessity of the state, *i.e.*, of coercion, for the transition from capitalism to socialism. The form of coercion is determined by the degree of development of the given revolutionary class, furthermore, by such special circumstances as, e.g., the heritage of a long, reactionary war, furthermore, by the forms of the resistance of the bourgeoisie or of the petty bourgeoisie. Therefore there is not the slightest contradiction in principle between Soviet (*i.e.*, socialist) democracy and the application of the dictatorial rule of individual persons."
>
> —(*Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. XXII, pp. 524*f*., Ger. ed.) [see Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government," April 1918, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27]

But in order to make clear his real thoughts, he hastened to add the following indispensable supplementary statement, without which everything is one-sided and therefore false:

> "The more resolutely we now come out in favor of a ruthlessly strong power, for the dictatorship of individual persons in ***definite labor processes*** during certain periods of ***purely executive functions***, the more manifold must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to paralyze every trace of a possibility of distorting the Soviet power, in order to tear out, incessantly and tirelessly, the weeds of bureaucratism."
>
> —(*Ibid.*, p. 532)

It is precisely those manifold forms and methods of ***democratic control from below*** which the bureaucracy has destroyed in its development towards despotic rule. In destroying proletarian democracy and the political rule of the working class, the bureaucracy has lifted itself beyond the reach of the masses out of which it emerged. Having abandoned its original class base, it must find a new one, for it cannot last long as a thin bureaucratic stratum hanging, so to speak, in mid-air. The social layers with which it has linked itself are the well-to-do farmers, the factory directors and trust heads, the Stakhanovite aristocracy, the officialdom of the party, the Soviet apparatus, the Red Army and the G.P.U. But none of these, nor all of them taken together, represents a *class*, with a distinctive function in the productive life of the country, or with specific property forms upon which to build a firm class and firm class rule. Their whole *tendency* is to develop into a new property-owning class, that is, into a capitalist class based on private property. Blocking the road to the realization of this yearning stands the still powerful reality of the nationalization of the means of production and exchange, centralized planning, and the protection of nationalized industry which is afforded by the monopoly of foreign trade.

The bureaucracy, closely interlinked with these restorationist strata of Soviet society and embodying their social aspirations, is now driven by inexorable forces to take its next big step backward. Hitherto, the reaction has been confined essentially to the destruction of the whole political superstructure of the workers' democracy established by the revolution, and to the physical annihilation of all those who were the living connection between today and the revolutionary yesterday. From now on, the anti-Soviet hureaucracy will, and in a certain sense, must seek its self-preservation by an assault upon the economic foundations of the workers' state: nationalized property, planning, the monopoly of foreign trade.

In our opinion, it cannot and will not succeed in establishing the rule of an independent, new Russian capitalist class, even if we arbitrarily exclude the possibility, ***by no means exhausted***, of the crushing of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy by a resurgent proletariat. The new strata of society gathered around the ruling Soviet clique *may* prevail over the Russian proletariat in the period to come. But we do not believe that they are strong or solidly rooted enough to develop into a national neo-bourgeoisie capable of resisting, on a capitalist basis, the infinitely stronger bourgeoisie of the foreign imperialist countries.

In other words, the Stalinist bureaucracy and its satellites are doomed regardless of the outcome. They cannot develop into an independent ruling capitalist class in Russia. Either they are defeated by the proletariat which carries through a political revolution for the purpose of restoring workers' democracy and of safeguarding the economic basis of the workers' state which still exists. Or they are defeated by powerful foreign imperialism, which would wipe out that old economic basis, reduce the Union to a semi-colonial country, and convert the restorationist strata not into a ruling capitalist class for Russia but merely into a compradore agency of world imperialism, occupying a position not dissimilar from that of the Chinese national bourgeoisie.

The class conscious workers will place all their hopes and bend all their efforts towards the realization of the former outcome of the struggle. The building of the revolutionary party to lead the Russian masses in the battle to save the Russian revolution is dependent upon the success of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist world. The depression and reaction in the ranks of the Russian proletariat was created by the defeats of the working class in the rest of the world, by the feeling of the Russians that they had no powerful allies in the capitalist world. The growth and victories of the Fourth International will galvanize the latent revolutionary strength of the Russian masses and set it into irresistible motion. Everything depends on the speed with which we accomplish our indicated task.

* * *

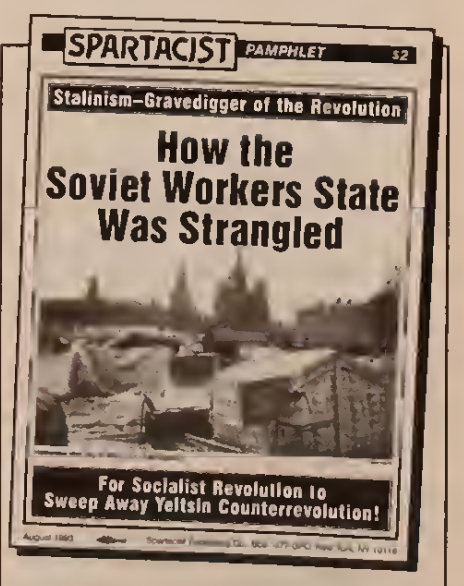
The crisis of the Russian revolution has emboldened all the critics of Bolshevism, that is, of revolutionary Marxism—all of them, old and new. But all their hoary argumentation leaves the Marxist unrepentant for his solidarity with those principles and ideas which made the Russian revolution possible. For in abandoning these ideas, he would have to adopt others, and what others are there? Should he adopt those of the Mensheviks? It is true: had they triumphed, the proletarian revolution in Russia would not have degenerated into its Stalinist caricature for the simple reason that there would have been no proletarian revolution. Should he adopt those of the Western European confrères of the Mensheviks, the parties of the Second International? It is true: they did not let the proletarian revolution in Germany and Austria and Italy degenerate, and that by the simple device of crushing it in the egg and thus facilitating the consolidation of their famous bourgeois democracy which brought the working class directly under the knife of Hitler and [Austrian chancellor] Schuschnigg and Mussolini. Should he adopt those of the anarchist politicians who have become so clamorous of late, especially about the Kronstadt rebellion? But the lamentable collapse of anarchist politics in Spain, the servile collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the heaping of capitulation upon capitulation and the yielding of one position after another without a struggle, are not calculated to attract us away from Marxism.

It is not in place here to dwell on the flawlessness of Bolshevism and all its policies in the great period of the revolution. Its defects may be freely granted. But the oppressed and exploited of the world have not yet been offered a scientific guide to action in their struggle for freedom which can even remotely claim to serve as a substitute for the party and principles of Lenin. In the face of enormous obstacles—not the least of which were created, with arms in hand, by the present-day bourgeois and reformist critics—Lenin and the Bolsheviks carried through the first conscious proletarian revolution. They laid the economic foundation for the new society without class rule, without iniquity or exploitation or oppression. They—and nobody else—gave us a picture of the truly breathtaking prospects for human advancement and human dignity which are open to us as soon as capitalism is sent to the rubbish-heap.

Rash indeed would he be who forecast the immediate future of the Russian revolution. But whatever it may be, its historical achievements are already imperishable. The first steam engine may not have been much faster than the old-fashioned stage-coach, if it was able to move at all. But the country's network of rails is today skimmed by speedy, advanced, streamline locomotives, while the stage-coach can be found only in museums. The creation of the steam-engine was a monumental contribution to human progress. The creation of the first Soviet republic was an even greater contribution. History will give little place to the period of Stalinist counter-revolution, for it will treat it as a passing historical episode. But the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and its enduring achievements will never be wiped out of the consciousness of man, for it sounded the knell of all class rule, marked the beginning of the end of man's pre-history, the inauguration of a new era for a new man. In this sense, Lenin and his party of revolutionary Bolsheviks could say with Ovid: *Jamque opus exegi: quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes, Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas.*

"I have now completed a work which neither the wrath of Jove, nor fire, nor the sword, nor the corroding tooth of time, shall be able to destroy." ■

**International Trotskyist movement fought for unconditional military defense of USSR during World War II. Graphic shows articles from American SWP's *Militant* and French Trotskyist press.**

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# Oakland...

*(continued from page 12)*

she was no longer a "street activist" or even city councilman: "Once you assume the responsibility and you take the oath of office, you have to make it clear to your mother, your father and your supporters that you're going to operate in the public's interest." The "public interest" is a code word for serving the interests of the capitalist class.

Some Democrats in Oakland and other cities continue to push for the cops to remove the Occupy encampments. Others, like Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who pledges her support to "peaceful protesters in this struggle for economic justice," see an opportunity to boost the Democrats' electoral fortunes. Here again the Democrats are served by their loyal foot soldiers in the labor bureaucracy. Having

AP

**November 3: Oakland mayor Jean Quan with police chief the day after brutal cop attack on protesters.**

done virtually nothing to defend even their own members against the capitalist rulers' relentless union-busting assaults, the union misleaders now embrace the Occupy movement. They supported the call for a "general strike" precisely because it wasn't one.

Left-talking ILWU Local 10 executive board member Clarence Thomas, who was a prominent spokesman for the November 2 action, lauded the fact that the "general strike" call had come not from labor but from the "grassroots." This was merely a convenient ruse to cover for the fact that none of the union tops, including the more "militant" ILWU bureaucrats, mobilized their ranks in labor action.

On the day of the rally, Jack Heyman announced from the podium that ILWU members had refused to take jobs and had effectively shut down the port. This was not the case. As Clarence Thomas said in an interview that day, it was "misinformation." While a leaflet signed by Heyman, Thomas and a few other ILWUers calling to "Defend Occupy Oakland with the Muscle of Organized Labor" was given big play by Bay Area rad-libs, the membership of the union was never mobilized to take any such action, or even much informed. Many longshoremen did take jobs, and the port was not shut down during the day.

Thousands of protesters did shut down the port that night. But the politics that drove this action was not qualitatively different from the "no business as usual" liberalism of the rest of the rally, precisely because it was *not* an action carried out by labor. It did nothing to advance the consciousness of the workers, nor of the protesters, of labor's class power. Instead, protesters were left with the idea that all they needed to do was to set up a picket line and the workers wouldn't work. The workers were relegated to a subordinate role, subsumed under the populism that dominated the overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois protest and that was pushed by *all* the union bureaucrats, including those of the ILWU.

### The 1946 Oakland General Strike

Much was made of the November 2 action as the first "general strike" in this country since the 1946 Oakland general strike, which was part of the largest strike wave in U.S. history. The 1946 strike was sparked when workers walked out in protest against police herding a convoy of scab trucks with products for two major department stores that were being struck by women workers. As described by Stan Weir, a supporter of Max Shachtman's Workers Party and a participant in the strike, "truck drivers, bus and streetcar operators and passengers, got off their vehicles and did not return. The city filled with workers, they milled about in the city's core for several hours and then organized themselves" ("1946: The Oakland General Strike," libcom.org). That included shutting down all stores except pharmacies and food markets; cordoning off the center of the city, directing traffic and only allowing those with union cards in; forming flying squads of workers to patrol against any strikebreaking activity.

That is what the mobilization of labor's power in an actual general strike looks like, not some one-day protest to blow off steam like regularly takes place in many European countries and not what took place in Oakland on November 2. Whatever may be the spark for a general strike, when workers shut down production and run various aspects of society themselves, their action poses the question of which class shall rule.

The 1946 strike also clearly demonstrated the commitment of the labor bureaucracy to the maintenance of the capitalist order. The American Federation of Labor and Central Labor Council leaders worked overtime to keep the strike contained. Dave Beck, the vice president of the Teamsters union at the time, denounced the general strike as "nothing but a revolution" and ordered Teamsters to break the strike. Local union leaders made a settlement with Oakland city officials to end it. The workers went back to work, their strike sabotaged by their own misleaders.

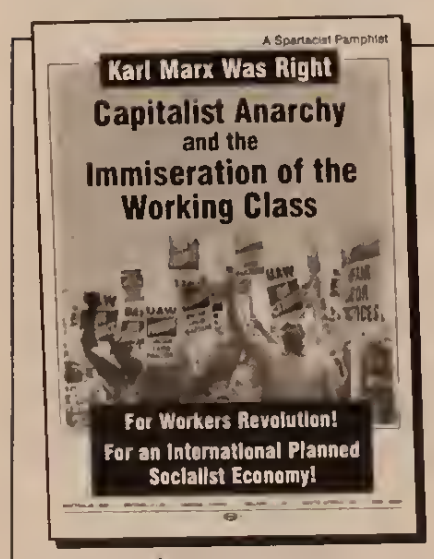
### The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

The Occupy protests have tapped into the widespread anger of many against the increasing destitution brought on by the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. But the populist notion, promoted by many in the petty-bourgeois Occupy movement, that the struggle is to "reclaim our democracy" from greedy bankers and corporate magnates is not only false but dangerous. This country was founded on the enslavement of black people and the genocidal annihilation of Native Americans. Its history is riddled with the bodies of working-class fighters killed at the hands of the police or the courts. The banks and corporations didn't hijack the government in the last couple of decades or with the onset of the Wall Street crash. The purpose of this government has always been to defend the property and profits of the ruling class.

The wealth of this country is actually overwhelmingly concentrated in the handful of families—far less than 1 percent of the population—that own the corporations and the banks and whose profits are derived through the exploitation of labor. This capitalist class runs both the Democratic and Republican parties, whose main difference is not *what* they do but *how* they do it. The Republicans make no bones about being the party of "big business" in viciously going after the working class, blacks, immigrants and the poor. The Democrats lie and do the same thing. The "choice" at election time is simply which capitalist party will oversee the brutal repression of the working class and oppressed at home and prosecute U.S. imperialism's bloody wars and occupations abroad.

America is ruled by a single class—it is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The facade of democracy serves to obscure the fact that the capitalist state is an instrument of organized violence—consisting at its core of the police, military, courts and prisons—for maintaining capitalist rule.

The Occupy movement largely expresses a cry of rage by white, petty-bourgeois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# SYC Speaker: "Cops Are Not Workers, They Are Strikebreakers"

AP

**Cops advance on Occupy Oakland protesters in early morning of November 3.**

*We print below a speech, edited for publication, given by a Spartacus Youth Club representative to an Occupy Oakland protest against police brutality at the encampment outside City Hall on October 29.*

The brutal attack on Occupy Oakland, the mass arrests, tear-gassing and nearly lethal attack on Scott Olsen by an army of cops shows what the police are all about: repression, racist terror and murder. Along with the courts, prisons and military, the cops make up the armed fist of the state, which defends the property and profits of the capitalist ruling class. Cops are not workers, they are strikebreakers. They shot Oscar Grant down in cold blood. Cops are not potential allies, they are our enemy.

The slogan "We are the 99 percent" actually blurs the class line and disguises the class nature of the capitalist state and all its political parties. Some people think that [mayor] Jean Quan betrayed the protesters. But in reality she is a Democratic Party capitalist politician who was doing her job as the city commander of the OPD [Oakland Police Department], just like Obama does as Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism.

The Democrats, every bit as much as the Republicans, are the politicians of the capitalist ruling class. And Quan simply showed the reality behind the sometime "progressive" mask the Democrats put on to fool the workers and oppressed. Now the Democrats, whose hands are dripping with the blood of millions of victims of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad, are swooping in to channel the protesters' anger into the shell game of electoral politics.

The current economic crisis has sparked the mass protests. But to actually end exploitation and oppression, you have to do something fundamentally different. We are fighting to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the workers in smashing the capitalist state, expropriating the banks and corporations and building a socialist world in which those who labor rule.

Acme

**Oakland, December 1946: Mass workers rally at Latham Square. General strike showed power of labor organized as a class.**

# Immigration...

*(continued from page 1)*

the state or going deeper underground, where they will be vulnerable to exploitative employers, unscrupulous landlords and violent criminals. While today's bigots have found more sophisticated ways to intimidate minority groups, there's a short distance between Bull Connor and today's slumlords, sweatshop owners and anti-immigrant demagogues." The vile segregationist Connor, Birmingham's Commissioner of Public Safety in the early 1960s, was notorious for setting police dogs and high-pressure hoses against civil rights demonstrators.

The keynote speaker for a recent rally in Birmingham against the new Alahama law was Democratic Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez, whose speeches often link opposition to anti-immigrant measures to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. The struggles of that time broke the back of Jim Crow segregation in the South. But the program of the liberal civil rights leadership, which preached reliance on the capitalist courts and the Democratic Party, derailed the fight for black freedom as it confronted the all-sided racial oppression that is embedded in the structure of American capitalism. Reliance on the Democratic Party and the capitalist state is no less a dead end in the fight for immigrant rights today.

Gutierrez played a prominent role, along with a host of Democratic Party politicians, Catholic church figures and union officials, in heading mass protests against the Bush administration's anti-immigrant drive in 2006. As the reformist left chimed in with talk of a "new civil rights movement," the rallying cry of "Today we march, tomorrow we vote" paid off handsomely for the Democrats, who captured the overwhelming majority of the Latino vote in the last presidential elections. The results can be seen in the massive *increase* in deportations under Barack Obama. Gutierrez, who likes to occasionally posture as a critic of Obama's crackdown on immigrants, has repeatedly called for the military reinforcement of the border with Mexico and pushed "reforms" of deportation guidelines so that they could more effectively target "real criminals"—the same premise as the "Secure Communities" dragnet.

The political shell game in which the Democratic Party postures as the "friend" of immigrants, labor and black people is a central pillar of U.S. capitalist rule. Perpetuating this fraud among workers, the pro-capitalist trade-union leadership acts as a central obstacle to mobilizing labor in its own interests and in the interests of the oppressed—from fighting the ravages of the capitalist economic crisis to defending black and immigrant rights and organizing the "open shop" South.

Getty

**Los Angeles: Protest against "Secure Communities" mass deportation program, August 15.**

There will be no effective resistance to the immiseration of the working people without the unity in struggle of the labor movement and the black and Latino poor. Our aim as Marxists is to advance the solidarity and consciousness of the entire working class—black, white, Latino; native-born and foreign-born—in the struggle to build a workers party in opposition to all the parties of capitalist class rule. A revolutionary workers party, with black and immigrant workers prominently in its leadership, is the necessary instrument for making the working class conscious of its historic task of overthrowing the capitalist system and building a society where those who labor rule. ■

youth as the avenues that they thought would be open to them after going thousands of dollars in debt for a college degree are increasingly closed. From their vantage point, this is an abrogation of the promise of the "American dream" with its attendant, if threadbare, Horatio Alger myth that those who study and work hard will prosper.

For the working class, the idea that their children would have a better future than themselves has receded further and further out of reach. And for black people in this country, the American dream has always been a nightmare. Class divisions and racial fault lines rend the Occupy movement's much-vaunted 99 percent. Their populist appeals reverberate less among the largely black members of Local 10 than they do among teachers and nurses. As one minority activist, who is sympathetic with Occupy Oakland, put it in describing the attention this movement has received: "It's the Columbine phenomenon. When it happens to white people, it becomes news. This has been happening to people in my neighborhood all the time" (*Oakland Tribune*, 2 November).

Occupy Oakland named its encampment after Oscar Grant, the young black worker who was shot down in cold blood by a BART cop early on New Year's Day 2009. This is a statement of solidarity and recognition of the reality of racist cop terror. But the slogan "we are the 99 percent" falsely puts forward the idea that all those not in the top 1 percent have common interests. This was picked up by the Oakland Police Officers' Association in a sinister letter to "the citizens of Oakland" on the eve of the November 2 protest. Declaring "we, too, are the 99% fighting for hetter working conditions, fair treatment and the ability to provide a living for our children and families," the letter ended with an appeal for "real leaders NOW" to back them up in doing their job—from lobbing tear gas grenades at protesters to strengthening their power as a racist occupying army in the Oakland ghettos.

The cops, who had largely been held in reserve on November 2, were itching for the opportunity to bust some heads. And at the end of the night, the police once again launched an assault on protesters in downtown Oakland, rupturing the spleen of yet another Iraq war veteran and arresting over 100. Echoing city authorities, protest organizers have launched a hue and cry against "violent" anarchists. This serves only to alibi the cops. In fact, the anarchists share the liberal politics of the organizers of the Occupy movement, simply giving them a (generally infantile) "streetfighting" veneer. All opponents of police terror must demand that all charges be dropped! That means rejecting the notion promoted by many in the Occupy movement that the cops are potential allies.

WV Photo

**Port of Oakland, November 2.**

The attacks on Occupy Oakland have given the protesters a bloody taste of the police terror and repression that is an everyday fact of life for blacks in the inner cities of this country. Any worker who engages in struggle to defend his union, job, wages and working conditions gets a lesson in the class nature of the capitalist state. The march on the Port of Oakland on November 2 was promoted as being in solidarity with ILWU workers battling the giant EGT grain-exporting consortium at the port of Longview, Washington. In the fight to defeat EGT's union-busting drive, ILWU members have been brutally assaulted and arrested by the cops and the union has been hit with massive fines by the courts. The workers have fought back, as seen in the mass picket set up on September 8 to stop trains carrying grain into the terminal, backing off the cops and the company's security thugs (see "ILWU Fights Deadly Threat," *WV* No. 986, 16 September). This battle gave a small, if real, taste of the power that lies in the hands of the working class.

### For Workers Revolution to Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!

In a 4 November *Liberation* editorial titled "The Movement We Need for the Society We Deserve," the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) argues that despite the "problems" of the Occupy movement, "revolution is a process. Liberal movements become radical and then revolutionary as they are confronted with new challenges, obstacles and needs." To be sure, many people are propelled into struggle in opposition to the injustices of this society while still being animated by the liberal notion that this system can be reformed to address the needs of "all of the people." But such movements do not become revolutionary simply through the course of struggle.

On the contrary, the movements of the past—from the civil rights movement to mass protests against the Vietnam War—demonstrate that those who do not break from the liberal belief in the inherent, if supposedly abused, "democracy" of capitalist America will for the most part end up serving it, usually as part of the Democratic Party. That self-proclaimed "socialists" like the PSL, the International Socialist Organization and others laud the Occupy movement is a statement of their commitment to reinforcing the deadly illusion that this government can, with sufficient pressure, be made to serve the interests of the many as opposed to the profits of the few.

Some young militants in the Occupy movement will no doubt be propelled into questioning the nature of this society and the state. Our purpose is to win such individuals to a revolutionary Marxist worldview based on the understanding that this system cannot be reformed but must be abolished, and that the only class with the social power and historic interest to do so is the working class.

It is small wonder that few, if any, in the Occupy movement have any sense of the class power of the workers. For decades, thanks to the misleaders of labor, working people have suffered one defeat after another. Organized labor has been reduced to little more than 10 percent of the country's workforce, while the masses of unorganized are ground into further destitution. To transform the unions into bastions of class struggle on workers' behalf and on behalf of all the victims of the capitalist rulers requires a leadership that begins from the understanding that the interests of labor and capital are irreconcilably counterposed. The fight for a class-struggle labor leadership is integral to building a multiracial revolutionary workers party that would champion black freedom, full citizenship rights for all immigrants, women's liberation and the cause of all the oppressed. Such a party is the critical instrument for leading the battle to sweep away the barbarism of capitalist class rule through proletarian socialist revolution. ■

# Baltimore...

*(continued from page 3)*

were hawked by laboratory supply companies the world over, generating billions of dollars in profit, her family was for years kept in the dark. Her daughter Deborah told Skloot that while she "can't get mad at science" because it helped people live better lives, she wanted health insurance so she could have access to medicine that her mother's cells probably helped make.

Deborah Lacks, who died from a heart attack in 2009, was a microcosm of the health crisis afflicting the black population. She had high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, depression and anxiety disorder. Life expectancy for black people in the U.S. is six years less than that of whites. At 13.3 per one thousand, the black infant mortality rate is almost double the national average and higher than that of Sri Lanka.

Wretched housing, entrenched poverty, mass unemployment, rotten health care: these conditions define life for the mass of the black population, whose segregation at the bottom of society is a fundamental feature of American capitalism. When the multiracial working class seizes power from the capitalist exploiters and establishes a workers government, it will lay the basis for building a planned economy in which all are guaranteed jobs, quality health care and integrated, quality housing and schools. It is only through the construction of an egalitarian socialist society that the chains of racial oppression can be broken once and for all. ■

# Chile...

*(continued from page 12)*

Radical Party as well as some Christian Democrats. The Allende government was not, as maintained by reformists around the world, a "people's government" gradually introducing socialism. It was a government committed to the maintenance of capitalism. The presence of bourgeois parties in the UP coalition was a guarantee to the capitalists that the workers parties would not take any steps to threaten the profit system.

Even before assuming office, Allende signed an agreement pledging not to permit the formation of "private" armed forces—i.e., workers militias. The Allende government disarmed the workers by seizing their weapons and by sowing illusions in a "peaceful road to socialism." This cleared the way for the bourgeoisie to crush the working class. With the support of U.S. imperialism, the Pinochet junta killed at least 30,000 leftists, workers and peasants, sending untold thousands more into concentration camps and exile.

This bloody state terror, aimed at breaking the back of the militant Chilean proletariat, allowed the bourgeoisie to proceed with a "shock therapy" program of economic austerity devised by University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman. Viewing the large state universities as breeding grounds for radicalism and protest, Pinochet cut their funding and later promoted a proliferation of private universities.

The end of the Pinochet dictatorship in 1990 was followed by the 20-year rule of the "center left" Concertación (pact) coalition, which claimed to be restoring democracy to Chile. This latter-day popular front of the SP with Christian Democrats and others was charged by the bourgeoisie with bringing "stability" and economic growth to Chile. But what the capitalist governments of Concertación and, more recently, Piñera have meant for workers, the rural and urban poor and oppressed indigenous minorities such as the Mapuche is continued widespread inequality and poverty. Chile has the highest per capita income of any country in Latin America. It also is rated by a 2010 UN development report as one of the 15 most unequal countries in the world.

## For Free, Quality Education for All!

The bourgeois rulers maintain elite schools to ensure quality education for their children and to train the managers and technicians needed to administer the capitalist system. When it comes to the working class and the poor, the capitalists seek to spend on education only what they calculate they can get back in profit.

A reference point for student protesters in Chile today is the massive strike at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in 1999-2000. For nine and a half months, students shut down UNAM in a hard-fought battle against attacks on access to the university for working-class and poor youth. Our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México intervened actively into the strike, pointing to the necessity for students to ally with the social power of the working class and combating illusions in the bourgeois-populist Party of the Democratic Revolution. The strike gained support among key sectors of the working class, intersecting broad discontent with capitalist austerity. But the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy was largely responsible for demobilizing the workers and the student strike was left isolated. While the strike succeeded in stopping the imposition of tuition fees—an important gain—it was ultimately broken through brutal state repression.

In an article assessing the lessons of the UNAM strike, the GEM demanded the abolition of the bourgeois university administration and called for student, teacher and worker control of the university ("A Marxist Analysis of the UNAM Student Strike, 1999-2000," *Espartaco* No. 31 [Spring 2009], reprinted in *WV* No. 958, 7 May 2010). The article continued: "These slogans, together with our main call for free, quality education for all, point toward the need for socialist revolution, the only way to put both education and culture not only within reach, but also at the service of the masses."

In order for education to be truly accessible to all, we fight not only for abolishing fees and for nationalization of the private universities, but also for open admissions—all who want to study should be able to do so—and for a state-paid living stipend for students. Securing the right of all to quality education, health care, decent jobs and housing will become possible when the working class has seized the mines, factories and banks and placed them in the service of meeting the needs of the working people instead of the tiny handful of capitalist exploiters. That requires socialist revolution to sweep away the capitalist state and expropriate the bourgeoisie.

## Workers Power Is Key

Coinciding with the Chilean students' protests, the miners—the most powerful and strategic section of the proletariat—have waged a series of strikes in recent months. Chile is the world's largest producer of copper, and the Chilean bourgeoisie and its imperialist patrons have raked in massive profits from the rise in copper prices in recent years. In July, miners at the state-owned Codelco mines, which produce more than 10 percent of the world's copper, struck for 24 hours against steps toward privatization. Later that month, over 2,000 striking miners shut down the world's biggest copper mine, La Escondida, for two weeks demanding higher wages and benefits. The strike cost BHP Billiton and its partners $30 million a day.

In late October, workers at the world's third-largest copper mine, Collahuasi, went on strike over bonus payments. This followed their strike last year—the longest ever at a private mine in Chile—when they held out for 32 days against the Xstrata and Anglo American bosses. During the recent action, mineworkers union leader Cristian Arancibia said: "In addition to our demands as workers at a multinational as powerful as Collahuasi, this mobilization is also a way of expressing our support to the demands of the student movement in our capacity as parents and guardians of thousands of youth who are setting an example in the struggle for social demands" (www.radio.uchile.cl, 29 October).

It is the social power of such workers, who can stop the flow of profit, that must be brought to bear in the struggle for free, quality education for all. Students are a petty-bourgeois layer in society, with no direct relationship to the means of production and hence little social power in their own right. However, their struggles can be a catalyst for broader class and social struggle. Such was the case in France in May 1968 when student protests were the immediate precursor to a millions-strong general strike by workers, leading to a prerevolutionary situation. The workers were subsequently sold out by the reformist misleaders of the French Communist Party (see "France, May 1968" *WV* Nos. 972, 974 and 976, 21 January, 18 February, 18 March). The point for radical students is to view the working class not simply as allies in their struggle but as the only class that, because of its unique position in capitalist production, has the power to overthrow the profit system.

The main student organizations are led by members of the CP and SP, as is the CUT union federation. These reformist misleaders constitute a major obstacle to mobilizing the social power of the working class, continuing to promote the same popular-frontist politics that led to bloody defeat in 1973. The CP and SP preach the treacherous notion that the interests of the workers and oppressed can be served through the democratic reform of Chilean capitalism. An example is the student leaders' call on the Piñera government to fund free education by increasing taxes on mining profits, renationalizing more of the copper industry and cutting the defense budget, as if the problem were that the bourgeoisie doesn't know where to find the money for education! While the student protests have prompted Piñera to make a show of throwing some more government money into education, his real response was the legislation he recently sent to Congress as he sat down for "negotiations" with student leaders. The proposed law mandates five-year prison sentences for students occupying schools or blocking traffic, along with a host of other repressive measures.

## Illusions in Bourgeois Democracy

As reported on the London *Guardian* Web site (7 October), CP youth leader Camila Vallejo "said the students will prepare now to make the government pay in the next elections." With municipal elections next year and presidential elections in 2013, Vallejo's comrades in Congress have been discussing a potential electoral alliance with leaders of the Party for Democracy, an integral part of the Concertación coalition. For all the CP's rhetoric against Piñera and Concertación, it is clear that the CP is looking to channel the discontent in the streets into a new electoral alliance of the left.

EFE

**September 22: High school and university students in Santiago demonstrate for free, quality education.**

Reuters

**Santiago: Riot police attack students during 48-hour national strike, August 25.**

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Reuters

**Salvador Allende (at right) with his commander-in-chief Augusto Pinochet one month before 1973 military coup.**

The CP and many on the left are also calling for a new constitution and a plebiscite on education reform. The current constitution originated in 1980, when Pinochet was in power, and retains many Pinochet-era restrictions on democratic freedoms while also specifically targeting workers, prohibiting strikes by public employees and forbidding union leaders from membership in political parties. While Trotskyists oppose such reactionary provisions and support workers struggles against them, the reformist SP and CP misleaders seek to channel workers' just hatred of the legacy of the Pinochet dictatorship into illusions in bourgeois democracy.

The protection of capitalist property rights against threats from the proletariat is enshrined in all bourgeois constitutions. So long as the mines, factories and banks remain in the hands of the capitalist class, Chile remains a dictatorship of capital. This dictatorship is defended by the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state: the army, cops, courts and prison system. The democratic trappings of parliament, referenda and constitutions are used by the bourgeoisie to obscure that the capitalist state is a machine for the violent suppression of the proletariat. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 October Revolution, explained: "The bourgeoisie are compelled to be hypocritical and to describe as 'popular government' or democracy in general, or pure democracy, the (*bourgeois*) democratic republic which is, in practice, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the exploiters over the working people" ("'Democracy' and Dictatorship," December 1918).

The bloody defeat of Allende's "peaceful road to socialism" provides an all-too-vivid confirmation of Karl Marx's teaching that the "working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes" (*The Civil War in France*, 1871). Marx's conclusion was that the capitalist state cannot be reformed but must be smashed through workers revolution. In keeping with their worship of bourgeois democracy, the CP and SP leaders have distanced themselves from the so-called *encapuchados* (masked youth) in the student protests, who have been denounced by the blood-drenched Chilean bourgeoisie as "violent." It is necessary for the workers movement to come to the defense of *all* the protesters, demanding the release of all those being held and the immediate dropping of charges.

## Lessons of the Popular Front

Workers and youth in Chile need to understand that undoing the "heritage of Pinochet," which many leftists call for, requires undoing the heritage of Allende also. The UP popular front came to power in 1970 as Chile was being swept by a wave of strikes by workers and occupations of landed estates by agricultural laborers and landless peasants. Far from representing a step toward socialism, the modest reforms of the Allende government were aimed at heading off this wave of struggle.

The nationalizations of mines and some foreign-owned light industry in 1971 sparked a further wave of working-class struggle. In response, the UP turned to repression and austerity, increasingly seeking to appease rightist opponents of the popular front. Bowing to a reactionary mobilization of sections of the petty bourgeoisie, in 1972 Allende invited military leaders into the government. He named Pinochet, who had butchered striking copper miners in the town of El Salvador in 1966, commander-in-chief of the army.

Allende preached faith in the supposed "neutrality" of the "democratic" military and promised not to touch the bourgeois officer corps. He pushed through a law allowing military raids in search of arms, ostensibly aimed against "extremists" of both the right and the left. Predictably, it was used exclusively against unions, factory workers and workers parties, while fascist groups built stockpiles of arms. In 1973, Allende took away the sliding scale of wages for workers at the state-owned El Teniente copper mine, prompting a strike that was repressed by riot cops. He also placed two mining provinces under military control.

Toward the end of the Allende regime, rejection of his anti-working-class policies had led workers in the industrial areas around Santiago to form *cordones industriales* (district coordinating bodies of factory committees). These embryonic formations of working-class power indicated that Chile had entered a prerevolutionary situation, with the class-collaborationist coalition in power increasingly unable to control the working class. This situation was similar to that in Russia in 1917. The different outcomes—victory for the proletariat in Russia, defeat in Chile—came down to the absence in the latter case of a Bolshevik-type party committed to leading the workers to power.

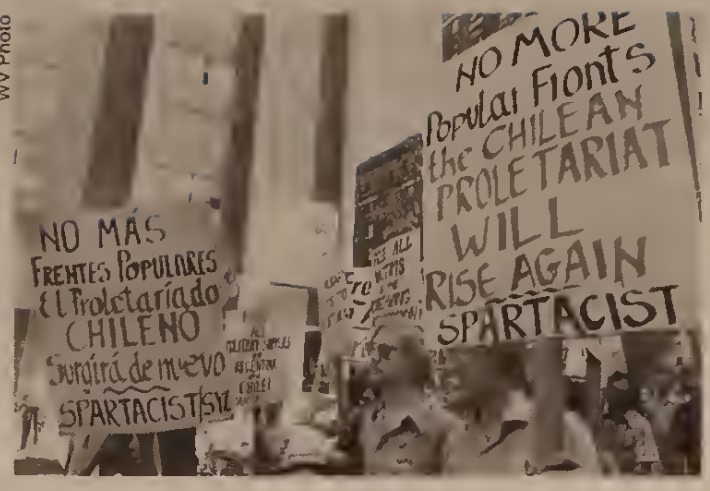
To conceal that their policy of class collaboration was what led to the defeat, the SP and CP continue to paint the Pinochet coup as the work of fascists and reactionaries in league with the CIA. While there is no doubt that such forces led and fomented the coup, every important sector of the Chilean capitalist class, including the "moderate" Christian Democrats and the "constitutionalist" officers of the UP regime, was involved in the coup in some form. Thus, responsibility for the physical annihilation of an entire section of the working class rests squarely upon the shoulders of the SP and CP misleaders, and those so-called Marxist parties in Chile and around the world that gave even the most critical support to the UP, such as the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). Responsibility also lies with the Stalinist regime in Cuba, whose program of "socialism in one country" meant endorsing the UP and opposing calls to expropriate the bourgeoisie. Fidel Castro went so far as to lecture striking El Teniente miners to "sacrifice more" for the good of the fatherland.

The Spartacist tendency was unique on the left internationally in opposing any political support to the UP from the beginning. As we wrote in "Chilean Popular Front," (*Spartacist* No. 19, November-December 1970):

> "It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

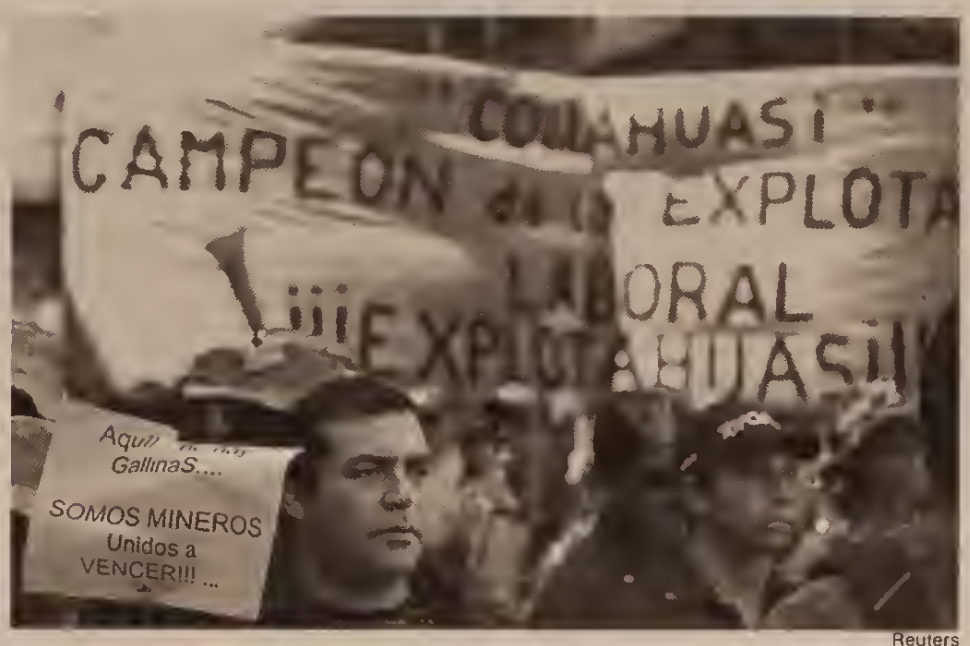
Writing of the 1930s Spanish Popular Front, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained that the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie assures defeat, noting that this represented "the entire experience of history, beginning at least with 1848. The modern history of bourgeois society is filled with all sorts of Popular Fronts, i.e., the most diverse political combinations for the deception of the toilers" ("The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning," 17 December 1937).

Militant workers and youth in Chile must be won to the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party in opposition to all wings of the bourgeoisie. Such a party must act, in Lenin's words, as a "tribune of the people," championing the rights of all the oppressed layers of society—women, gays, youth, the Mapuche, etc. A vanguard party will be forged only through hard struggle against nationalism—the predominant false consciousness, reinforced by imperialist domination, that ties the exploited and the oppressed to the Chilean bourgeoisie. The fight for proletarian power in Chile must be based on the perspective of socialist revolution throughout Latin America and in the U.S. imperialist center, where the world economic crisis has hit the multiracial proletariat hard. What is necessary is to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■




WV Photo

**11 September 1976: NYC protest against Pinochet junta on third anniversary of coup.**




Reuters

**22 November 2010: Workers march in support of month-long strike at Collahuasi, world's third-largest copper mine.**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WORKERS VANGUARD

## Labor Bureaucrats Promote "99 Percent" Populism

# Thousands Come Out to "Occupy Oakland" Protest

In the largest protest seen in Oakland in decades, more than 10,000 mobilized for a "general strike" in solidarity with "Occupy Oakland" on November 2. That night, a huge column of protesters marched on the Oakland port, shutting it down. A week earlier, on October 25, the city's streets were a virtual war zone, with an army of riot-equipped cops firing tear gas canisters and other projectiles at 3,000 demonstrators who had come out to protest the police destruction of the Occupy Oakland tent encampment that morning. Video images of Iraq war veteran Scott Olsen lying bleeding on the ground, his skull fractured, while a cop fired an explosive device at protesters trying to rescue him galvanized outrage around the country and around the world.

James Fassinger

**November 2: Marchers converge on Port of Oakland.**

The call for a "general strike" to protest the cop attack was made at an October 26 Occupy Oakland General Assembly of some 2,000 people. The Alameda Labor Council, SEIU Local 1021 city workers, the Oakland Education Association and other unions issued calls to their members to support the action. Speaking at Occupy Wall Street on October 27, Jack Heyman, a former member of the executive board of the Bay Area International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10, said that ILWU members would be trying to shut down the port on November 2.

There was anger in the ranks of labor against the vicious cop attack on Occupy Oakland, particularly among public workers. Moreover, the working class is burning with its own hatred of the banks and corporations that have busted their unions, savaged their jobs, stolen their houses and made their lives a scramble simply to survive. A mass mobilization of actual union power in defense of the Occupy protesters against police terror would have given the racist, strikebreaking cops some pause. It would also have given the workers as well as the young protesters—most of whom see labor as simply another victimized sector of society—a sense of labor's unique social power. The workers' strength lies in their collective organization and above all their ability to shut down production and stop the flow of profits into the coffers of the capitalist owners of industry and the banks.

**We Need a New Ruling Class—The Workers!**

But there was not even the semblance of any mobilization of union power, much less a "general strike," in Oakland on November 2. Instead, it was left to individual union members to decide whether to work or not. Many workers did take the day off and are proud that they did. But these workers had little organized presence as union contingents. Instead, they were dissolved into an amorphous mass of the "99 percent." The populist notion that everyone from the workers to students, yuppies and shopkeepers has common interests in opposition to the filthy-rich top 1 percent of this society serves the trade-union misleaders who are so desperate to avoid even the hint of class struggle that they can barely choke out the words "working class." Behind their cries to defend the "middle class" lie decades of subordinating the workers' interests to the capitalist class enemy, particularly through their support to the Democratic Party.

Last year, Bay Area labor tops, including the leadership of ILWU Local 10, pulled out all the stops to mobilize the ranks to get out the vote for Democrat Jean Quan as mayor of Oakland. Quan had a reputation as a "friend of labor" and supporter of various liberal causes. Now most of her former backers are screaming that she betrayed them by ordering the police attack on the Occupy Oakland encampment on October 25.

But Quan was simply fulfilling the job of the city's chief executive office and commander-in-chief of the Oakland police. As former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown explained in his column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (30 October), when Quan became mayor

*continued on page 8*

# Chile: Mass Protests Demand Free Education

Chile has been convulsed for months now by mass protests that began with a struggle for free higher education. Since May, hundreds of thousands of high school and university students have been waging a strike, occupying schools and campuses around the country, while huge demonstrations have taken place in the capital Santiago and nationwide. Long-standing anger over entrenched inequalities in the education system and a lack of funding has come to a head. An article on the BBC News Web site (11 August) noted: "At the heart of the students' anger is a perception that Chile's education system is grossly unfair—that it gives rich students access to some of the best schooling in Latin America while dumping poor pupils in shabby, underfunded state schools."

The right-wing government, headed by billionaire Sebastián Piñera of the National Renewal party, has responded to the protests with vicious state repression. Demonstrators have been routinely teargassed, attacked with water cannon and beaten. Thousands have been arrested and brutalized by the militarized police force, the *carabineros*. On August 25, 16-year-old Manuel Gutierrez was killed by police gunfire while passing by a protest in Santiago.

The student struggle has served as a lightning rod for the broader discontent of working people in Chile. Families, many of whom have been saddled with enormous debt in order to finance education for their children, have poured into the streets in solidarity with the students, protesting with *cacerolazos* (the banging of pots and pans). Trade unionists from the Central Confederation of Workers (CUT) have mobilized in support of the students, holding two-day work stoppages in August and October and joining rallies of hundreds of thousands. The workers have raised demands for better public health care, pensions and union rights.

In Chile, over half of the schools and most universities are privately run. As reported by the *Nation* (18 August), the average monthly minimum wage is $385, college tuition averages $485 per month and the average student debt following graduation is $40,000. According to a comparison of educational standards internationally conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Chile ranked 64th out of 65 countries in terms of segregation according to social class in schools and colleges. Private secondary schools, including those run by the Catholic church, receive state subsidies in the form of a voucher system. Since fees are charged on top of the voucher, the scheme has predominantly benefited wealthier families. A central demand of the student strikers is for an end to "education for profit" and to state financing of private schools.

### Pinochet, Concertación and Education

The privatization of large sections of the education system dates back to the "free market" starvation policies implemented under the murderous dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. The Pinochet regime came to power in 1973 in a military coup that overthrew the Unidad Popular (UP) government headed by Socialist Party (SP) leader Salvador Allende. The UP was a classic popular front, an alliance of reformist workers parties, chiefly the SP and Communist Party (CP), with bourgeois forces—the small

*continued on page 10*

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 991

25 November 2011


## Down With Imperialist Sanctions!

# U.S./Israel Hands Off Iran!

Getty

ISNA

**Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Barack Obama at UN, September 21 (left). Tehran, 2007: Iranians lining up for gas after government announced rationing due to threat of more economic sanctions (right).**

NOVEMBER 21—Today's announcement by the Obama administration of a sharp escalation of economic sanctions against Iran is the latest in a series of belligerent moves by the U.S. imperialists and their Israeli junior partners. The stated purpose of these moves is to stop Iran's purported attempts to develop nuclear weapons, which the Iranian government has always denied. Taking aim at Iran's central bank and petroleum industry, the sanctions aim at making the country's economy scream, threatening to further pummel working people who are already suffering from rampant inflation, widespread unemployment and mounting shortages.

Last year, the Iranian government responded to prior sanctions, which had cut almost 2 percent off the annual growth of Iran's GDP, by taking an ax to government subsidies of fuel and other essential goods. The price of bread quickly tripled, while gasoline prices shot up fourfold. Now, Washington targets the Iranian Central Bank (ICB) as a "money laundering concern," while Britain announces it will deny Iran access to the financial hub in London. The imperialists aim to further restrict the ability of countries to pay for Iranian oil and gas, the source of 75 percent of that government's revenue.

The latest U.S. sanctions come two weeks after a November 8 report by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran. In 2007, the IAEA stated that Iran had dismantled efforts to build an atomic bomb four years earlier. Now, contradicting that conclusion, the same agency coyly speaks of "indications" that "some activities" related to nuclear weapons may have continued after 2003 and "may still be ongoing."

On November 18, just hours after the IAEA in Vienna adopted a resolution condemning Iran for its alleged nuclear program, the UN General Assembly in New York voted overwhelmingly to demand that Iran cooperate with an investigation into the crackpot story that Tehran had plotted to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. The bizarro accusation peddled by Washington is that Iran, using a flaky Iranian American used-car salesman as its agent, tried to hire hitmen from a Mexican drug cartel. (His "contact" turned out to be an informant for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.) The Iranian government cogently compared this fiction to the George W. Bush administration's concoction of Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction" as a pretext to launch the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The UN resolution exemplifies the role of that body as a fig leaf for the pursuit by the imperialists—centrally the U.S.—of their great-power interests, including through naked aggression against semi-colonial countries.

The escalating sanctions come as Israeli officials have been whipping up war hysteria and threatening to launch air strikes against suspected nuclear research sites in Iran. Determined to maintain its monopoly on nukes in the Near East, Israel conducted air strikes against Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. The stakes are much higher in any attack on Iran, which is a significant and historic power in the region.

The news that the government of Benjamin Netanyahu had discussed striking Iran was broken earlier this year by Meir Dagan, the former head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. In May, Dagan had told the press that a military strike aimed at taking out Iran's nuclear facilities was "the stupidest thing I ever heard," and would threaten to push Israel into a "regional war that it would not know how to get out of" (*Haaretz*, 1 June). Under Dagan, who has plenty of blood on his own hands, Israel tried to thwart Iran's nuclear program by injecting the Stuxnet computer virus into Iran's centrifuge system, which enriches uranium, and by carrying out assassinations of scientists as well as a senior commander of Iran's missile development program.

U.S. president Barack Obama, for his part, has repeatedly rattled his saber at Iran, declaring that he would keep "all options," including the threat of military attack, "on the table." Washington recently announced that next year U.S. and Israeli military forces will carry out their largest-ever joint exercises, "simulating the ballistic missile defense of Israel." Imperialist sanctions and military "options" go hand in hand. Recall that the 2003 war against Iraq, which led to the death of upward of a million Iraqis and unleashed communalist slaughter on a mass scale, was prepared by UN sanctions imposed 13 years earlier that killed 1.5 million people.

The misinformation offensive over Iran's nuclear program was powerfully exposed by journalist Seymour Hersh in "Iran and the Bomb: How Real Is the Nuclear Threat?" (*New Yorker* Web site, 6 June). Hersh recalled that the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), a summary of the views of senior officers from all major U.S. intelligence agencies, concluded "with high confidence" that Iran had stopped working toward a nuclear weapon in 2003. Hersh wrote that the original draft of this year's NIE update, later changed under pressure from the Obama White House, stated that Iran's supposed earlier nuclear weapons research targeted not Israel or West Europe but Iran's longtime nemesis Iraq, which Iranian leaders thought at the time was trying to develop nukes. Hersh explained: "The Iranian nuclear-weapons program evidently came to an end following the American-led invasion of Iraq, in early 2003, and the futile hunt for the Iraqi W.M.D. arsenal."

Iran has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is intended solely for peaceful purposes. In fact, in the face of imperialist nuclear blackmail and with continuing military threats, it is entirely rational and necessary for Iran to pursue getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. As the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a major think tank for the U.S. ruling class, admits, nuclear weapons "offer a deterrent capability: unlike Saddam's Iraq, a nuclear Iran would not be invaded, and its leaders would not be deposed" ("After Iran Gets the Bomb: Containment and Its Complications," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2010).

### U.S. Imperialist Terrorists

In the event of any military attack by the U.S. or by Israel on Iran, working people and the oppressed internationally must not be neutral but must take a clear side ***with Iran***. As Marxists, we do not give an iota of political support to the reactionary Islamic regime in Iran. But it is the nuclear-armed U.S. imperialists who are the main enemy of the world's working people and oppressed.

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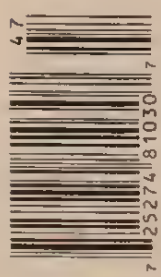

## South Africa: Early Years of the Communist Party....4

# Sentenced to Life in Child-Porn Witchhunt

# Free Daniel Guevara Vilca Now!

The following is not a fictional account inspired by the works of Franz Kafka. It is an outrage all too real. On November 3, 26-year-old Daniel Guevara Vilca was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. His supposed crime? Possession of child pornography. Vilca came under investigation in December 2009 when the Collier County, Florida, sheriff's department identified his computer IP address among those accessing child pornography on an online networking site. A Peruvian-born stockroom worker who required a translator to follow the court proceedings, Vilca has maintained throughout that he was not aware of the pornographic images that police investigators claimed to have found on a computer in his home.

Having turned down a plea bargain of some 20 years in prison, Vilca now faces a sentence comparable to someone convicted of first-degree murder. Vilca's defense lawyer Lee Hollander, who announced plans to appeal, denounced the sentence as cruel and unusual punishment, explaining, "People who are actually creating child porn or molesting children are getting lighter sentences than people who are in possession of it." After legally entering the U.S. in 2000, Vilca overstayed his visa, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (the hated I.C.E.) has already placed an immigration hold to prevent any possibility of his release. Even if Vilca wins his appeal, *la migra* is waiting in the wings to deport him. All that's missing from the state vendetta against this man is burning at the stake.

Child pornography, like any pornography, is images and words intended for entertainment—nothing more, nothing less. Sexually explicit art has existed since man began to draw. The criminalization of pornography, like that of drugs, gambling and consensual sexual activity, is aimed at regimenting the population and increasing the state's repressive powers. We call for abolishing all laws against such "crimes without victims." We oppose the efforts of the state to regulate what happens in the privacy of the bedroom. The only guideline that should exist is that of effective consent—that is, mutual agreement and understanding—regardless of age, gender or sexual preference.

The violent abuse and rape of children is a terrible crime. But the willful conflation of Jack the Ripper with Lewis Carroll (or Daniel Guevara Vilca, who may not have even known about the porn on his computer) has destroyed many innocent lives in the service of social reaction. The 2002 film *Capturing the Friedmans* documented how high school teacher Arnold Friedman and his 19-year-old son Jesse were framed up and jailed in a sex-abuse witchhunt in 1987 after Arnold had been entrapped in a sting operation for purchasing gay child pornography (see our review in *WV* No. 808, 29 August 2003). Equating looking at pictures with child abuse, the state compelled students and their parents to come forward with unbelievable charges of molestation and rape—without a shred of physical evidence. Arnold committed suicide in prison in 1995, apparently guilt-ridden over his son's imprisonment. Jesse was finally paroled in 2001 after serving 13 years of a 16-year sentence. As for the kids coerced into giving false testimony, ***their abuse was at the hands of the state.***

As we wrote in our review:

> "Beginning in the late 1970s a mass panic, manipulated by the state in collusion with the religious fundamentalists and anti-sex feminists, engulfed society for well over a decade. People across the nation were led to believe that there was an epidemic of child molestations, satanic ritual abuse of children and sexual predators hiding behind every teacher's desk. Hundreds of men and women ended up behind bars for crimes that never happened, when the real criminals sat comfortably in their blue uniforms and black robes."

Since that time, Democrats and Republicans alike have used the crusade against child porn to extend the reach of the state further into people's lives. The "Protecting Children from Internet Pornographers Act" working its way through Congress would mandate that Internet service providers keep a record of everyone's Web browsing for a year, to turn over to the authorities on request. And for Big Brother, it does not even matter if actual images of children are involved, as was upheld in a 2008 Supreme Court ruling. The FBI has carried out its sting operations against people who merely click on hyperlinks for nonexistent child-porn sites. After Vilca's arrest, Collier County sheriff Kevin Rambosk ranted: "We will find you, we will charge you, and you will be in jail for quite some time" (naplesnews.com, 26 January 2010).

Child-porn sweeps like those in which Vilca and Arnold Friedman were caught up are only a small part of the bourgeoisie's efforts to regiment the manifold expressions of human sexuality. "Obscenity" laws were used in this country for decades to ban the dissemination of birth control, outlaw homosexuality and silence trenchant social critics such as Lenny Bruce. "Age of consent" laws, which criminalize consensual sexual activity, are wielded in the (vain) attempt to dictate a sexless existence to teens. Teenagers across the country have been hauled off to jail on charges of creation, possession and distribution of child pornography for sexting—sending or receiving suggestive pictures of each other via cell phones or the Internet.

We have a long history of defending those individuals and organizations of all stripes caught in the government's anti-sex dragnets, including the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), which advocates the right to consensual intergenerational sex. Defense of the freedom to write about sexual matters and of the right to peruse whatever erotica or porn one prefers would seem to be ABC for those claiming to oppose oppression. But NAMBLA, demonized by the ruling class, smeared in the media and subjected to witchhunting prosecutions, has been slandered by gay rights organizations and self-proclaimed "socialists"—including by the Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party—as child molesters.

Kahn/Marco Eagle

**Daniel Guevara Vilca at sentencing hearing, November 3.**

In this, these leftists are imbibing the bourgeois prejudices and social mores that brand as "deviant" anyone who does not conform to the strictures of the monogamous nuclear family. Bolstered by religion, the family is the main instrument for the oppression of women and youth. For the bourgeoisie, it is the vehicle for passing wealth on to the next generation. For workers and the oppressed, the family serves to inculcate obedience and bears the burden of raising the next generation.

The capitalists would like nothing more than to have docile and industrious wage slaves so that they can extract greater profits. The bourgeois hypocrites preach puritanical anti-sex dogma to the masses (including "abstinence only" education in public schools) while they themselves enjoy whatever entertainment money can buy. The capitalist rulers, who can easily pay the costs for their own families, seek to ban the use of public funds for abortion. Any number of films, music and other artistic endeavors that offend some bourgeois moral code may be censored in public but treasured in the private collections of those who can afford to pay.

In what sick mind should the torturers of Abu Ghraib legislate what's "obscene"? Even as the bourgeoisie raises a hue and cry over protecting kids, real violence is perpetrated daily against children under this brutal capitalist system. The U.S. imperialist ruling class unleashes "kill teams" to hunt down youth in Afghanistan. At home it locks up poor youth, especially blacks and Latinos, in prison hellholes and shoots them down in the streets. It is closing schools and hospitals across the country and evicting families from their homes. More than 1.3 million children are homeless and nearly one in four struggles to get enough to eat.

Only workers revolution can put an end to these and other ravages of capitalism and lay the groundwork for constructing a rational socialist society free of crippling, cruel religious superstition. When the workers are in power, the necessary tasks, such as childcare, that today fall on individual families will be taken up by society as a whole. To lead the proletariat in sweeping away the forces of capitalist reaction, the vanguard party of the working class must struggle against every manifestation of backwardness and oppression. Dedicated to forging such a party, we take up the defense of Daniel Guevara Vilca, who should never have spent a day in prison. *Drop all the charges—free him now! I.C.E. hands off!* ■

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TROTSKY

### Consciousness and the Tasks of a Revolutionary Vanguard

LENIN

*The 1905 Russian Revolution was the dress rehearsal for the successful proletarian socialist revolution in October 1917. Resisting all-sided pressures to adapt to the existing level of consciousness was crucial to leading the working masses to victory. Writing amid the tumult of 1905, Lenin argued that education of the praletarian vanguard by the Balsheviks (who then considered themselves a wing of the Social-Democrats) could mean the difference between victory and defeat.*

We have quite a few Social-Democrats who give way to pessimism every time the workers suffer a reverse in single battles with the capitalists or with the government, and who scornfully dismiss all mention of the great and lofty aims of the working-class movement by pointing to the inadequate degree of our influence on the masses. Who and what are we, they say, to strive towards such things? It is purposeless to speak of the role of Social-Democracy as vanguard of the revolution when we do not even really know the mood of the masses, when we are unable to merge with them and to rouse the working masses! The reverses suffered by the Social-Democrats last May Day have considerably intensified this mood. Naturally, the Mensheviks, or new-Iskrists, have seized this opening to raise anew the special slogan "To the masses!"...

That comparisons are odious is an old axiom. In every comparison a likeness is drawn in regard to only one aspect or several aspects of the objects or notions compared, while the other aspects are tentatively and with reservation abstracted. Let us remind the reader of this commonly known but frequently ignored axiom and proceed to compare the Social-Democratic Party to a large school which is at once elementary, secondary, and collegiate. The teaching of the ABC, instruction in the rudiments of knowledge and in independent thinking, will never, under any circumstances, be neglected in this big school. But if anyone sought to invoke the need for teaching the ABC as a pretext for dismissing questions of higher learning, if anyone attempted to offset the impermanent, dubious, and "narrow" results of this higher learning (accessible to a much smaller circle of people than those learning the ABC) to the durable, profound, extensive, and solid results of the elementary school, he would betray incredible short-sightedness. He might even help to pervert the whole purpose of the big school, since by ignoring higher education he would simply be making it easier for charlatans, demagogues, and reactionaries to mislead the people who had only learned the ABC.

—V.I. Lenin, "On Confounding Politics with Pedagogics,"
June 1905, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8

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**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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**No. 991** **25 November 2011**

**PDC Partisan Defense Committee**
**CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES**
The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

# Free the Class-War Prisoners!

# 26th Annual PDC Holiday Appeal

The holiday season is once again upon us. Any day now, we'll be assaulted 24/7 with commercials hawking the latest PlayStations, full-page newspaper ads featuring Christmas lingerie and jewelry, sitcoms with oafish dads sporting hideous Christmas ties and endless broadcasts of the movie about the Midwestern banker who, thanks to his guardian angel Clarence, discovers that "It's a Wonderful Life." For most, this year's holidays mean that the bosses are in the Bahamas sucking up single malt scotch while paychecks are replaced with pink slips and the Santa shimmying down the chimney is a marshal serving a foreclosure notice. At the same time, poor families debate whether the small bit of money set aside for the holidays will be spent on presents or a bus ticket to visit their loved ones behind bars.

For us, this time of year is an occasion to redouble our commitment to those among the inhabitants of America's vast network of prisons who were singled out for standing up to racist capitalist oppression—the class-war prisoners. Twenty-six years ago, the Partisan Defense Committee revived the program of the early International Labor Defense (ILD) under its secretary, James P. Cannon, of sending stipends to the class-war prisoners—irrespective of their political views or affiliations. As Cannon wrote:

> "In one sense of the word the whole of capitalist society is a prison. For the great mass of people who do the hard, useful work there is no such word as freedom. They come and go at the order of a few. Their lives are regulated according to the needs and wishes of a few. A censorship is put upon their words and deeds. The fruits of their labor are taken from them. And if, by chance, they have the instinct and spirit to rebel, if they take their place in the vanguard of the fight for justice, the prisons are waiting."
>
> —James P. Cannon, "The Cause that Passes Through a Prison" (*Labor Defender*, September 1926)

We provide monthly stipends to 16 class-war prisoners and holiday gifts for them and their families. The $25 monthly stipends help ease a little bit the horrors of "life" in capitalist dungeons. More importantly, they are a necessary expression of solidarity with these prisoners—a message that they are not forgotten.

Since we initiated this program in 1986, we have provided stipends to over 30 class-war prisoners around the world. Among the first was former Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who spent 27 years in prison, for a crime that the state authorities knew that he did not commit, before being released in 1997. Geronimo died in June, an untimely death undoubtedly linked to his many years in prison.

Most of the class-war prisoners who receive PDC stipends have already spent decades in prison, and the capitalist rulers are determined not only to see them die behind bars but also to repeatedly subject them to harassment and degradation. American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier wrote us about his recent transfer to a prison in Florida far from his family and supporters, where the authorities placed him in a cell with a skinhead sporting on his back a tattoo of a KKK nightrider!

For those behind bars, the human tragedies that befall us all are made ever more acute by the enforced separation from family and friends. Jaan Laaman recently informed us of the death of his son Rick. Earlier this year, death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal lost his sister, Lydia Barashango, who was a tireless activist in Mumia's fight for freedom. Mumia also had the bittersweet experience of seeing his son, Jamal Hart, railroaded to prison on bogus gun-possession charges in retaliation for speaking out on his father's behalf, finally released from prison after serving every single day of his 15 and a half year sentence.

Persecution of those imprisoned for their political views and actions has not only continued unabated, but Obama and his top cop, Attorney General Eric Holder, are making reservations for many more to join those already behind bars. The Obama administration has expanded the repressive measures adopted during the Clinton/Bush years that are being wielded against those who propelled him into office—labor, blacks, immigrants and liberal youth. Obama has used the "anti-terror" laws to target leftist supporters of Latin American guerrillas and oppressed Palestinians, far surpassed the Bush regime in deporting immigrants and carried out the assassination abroad of an American citizen without even the pretense of charges or a trial.

The struggle to free the class-war prisoners is critical to educating a new generation of fighters against exploitation and oppression—a schooling centered on the role of the capitalist state, comprising the military, cops, courts and prisons. In recent weeks, the young activists of the "Occupy" protests have been on the receiving end of pepper spray, tear gas and police truncheons, with thousands arrested—a small taste not only of the daily hell of life for black people in this country but also what the bosses' government unleashes against workers when they engage in class struggle. This was seen in the brutal cop attacks and arrests this September of over 130 leaders, members and supporters of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in Longview, Washington. In its battle with the giant union-busting EGT grain exporter, the union has engaged in the kind of militant labor actions that built this country's industrial unions. A defeat in Longview would be a body blow against the ILWU as a whole.

The 16 class-war prisoners receiving stipends from the PDC are listed below:

**Mumia Abu-Jamal** is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." This year the Philadelphia district attorney's office unsuccessfully petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate the death penalty for this class-war prisoner. The D.A. now has until mid April to convene a new sentencing hearing, the sole purpose of which would be to determine whether Mumia is to be again sentenced to death or will rot in prison for life.

This December marks the 30th anniversary of Mumia's arrest for a killing that the cops know he did not commit. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Mountains of documentation proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have been submitted to the courts. But from top to bottom, the

*continued on page 10*

## An Injury to One Is an Injury to All!

WV Photo
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calnmo.com
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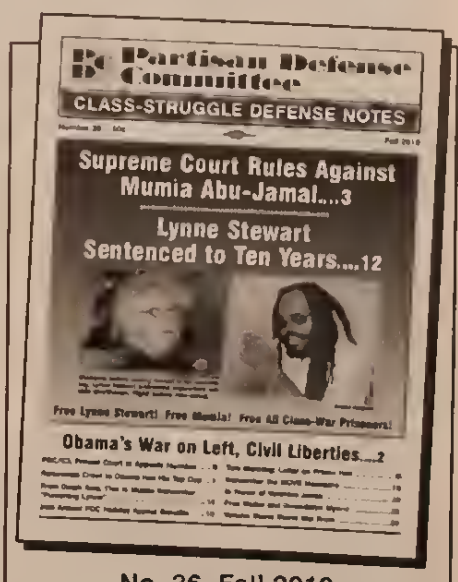


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## South Africa

# Early Years of the Communist Party

*We reprint below the first part of an article from* Spartacist South Africa *No. 7 (Winter 2011), incorporating minor factual corrections. It is an edited version of a class given by comrade Karen Cole at a meeting in 2000 of Spartacist/South Africa, section of the International Communist League.*

Urgent tasks faced the Third International in its early, revolutionary years. Out of the devastation of World War I and the Second International's betrayal of the

*PART ONE*

world working class, the Bolshevik Party in Russia led the first and only working class revolution. Workers around the world solidarised with this victory, and the Bolsheviks looked immediately to extending their revolution internationally. Nothing less than world revolution was on the agenda. They looked outward to differentiate among disparate elements from all sorts of backgrounds—anarchists, syndicalists, liberals, social-democratic workers, intellectuals—who subjectively sided with the overthrow of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The task was to draw a line to exclude the reformists and centrist pretenders and regroup with the genuinely revolutionary workers.

They fought to build a new International for their own survival as well as mankind's. They had to focus on the strategic battle fronts in the advanced industrial countries where revolution seemed most imminent—where the prerequisites seemed to be all there, particularly Germany. The lesson of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was that the leadership of a Bolshevik party like the one led by Lenin and Trotsky was the critical factor. That was the one prerequisite missing elsewhere, and it was decisive. This lesson was outlined most clearly in Trotsky's *The Lessons of October* (1924).

The newly formed Third International also organised to extend the revolution to the East and South, to the countries of belated capitalist development. The Russian Revolution had vindicated Trotsky's theory and programme of permanent revolution regarding the inseparable link between national liberation from the yoke of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution* (1929): "that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day." This understanding, proved in the experience of the Russian Revolution, opened the possibility of successful revolutionary struggle under the leadership of a proletarian vanguard in the colonial and less advanced countries. Trotsky's analysis and generalisation of permanent revolution, based on the experience of Russia and, in a negative sense, the 1925-27 aborted revolution in China, laid out the necessary programme to lead the colonial peoples to liberation.

UWC Robben Island Mayibuye Archive; Republic of South Africa (left inset); South African History Online (right inset)

**Early leaders of Communist Party of South Africa. Above, center: Sidney Bunting addressing Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union meeting, Johannesburg, circa 1926. Left: Edward Roux. Right: David Ivon Jones.**

Africana Museum, Johannesburg

**July 1913: Mounted police attack white South African mine workers. Strike over work hours grew to 19,000 men, affecting every mine.**

So this is the political context in which we have to examine the first years of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA)—from its beginnings in World War I through the late 1920s.

I want to briefly start with the split within the South African Labour Party which eventually led up to the founding of the Communist Party of South Africa, and describe the historical period to get a sense of the leap that the founders of the early CPSA had to make if they were to be the leadership of a South African revolution. They started out expecting that the organised and militant white mineworkers would be the vanguard of the proletarian revolution—but it didn't work out that way, reflecting the unique historical overlap between race and class in South Africa.

After the Anglo-Boer War [1899-1902], the policy of the British colonialists was to assist British immigrants in settling as a bulwark against Afrikaner nationalism. On the Rand [central gold mining region], political rights were restricted to whites. The English-speaking workers who brought specialised skills from Britain were kept as a supervisory layer in the mines, and their job classifications were protected by colour-bar laws. On the Rand with its centre in Johannesburg (and I am going to mainly talk about the Rand because this was the centre of class struggle), the gold mine commission legislated the racial exclusions with the full support of the whites-only union leadership. Black Africans were permanently disenfranchised migrant mineworkers, forced off their rural homes by hut and poll taxes and expelled by white farmers. They were confined and policed in fenced-in compounds, with no political or union rights. Blacks were considered expendable, replaceable and were offered no training. Their every movement was totally controlled and resistance was met with swift punishment and death. White workers consistently scabbed on any attempts by black workers to strike.

But the inexorable laws of capitalism which demand continual maximising of profits—particularly in the labour-intensive deep gold-mining industry—set the mine owners and white miners at odds. The Afrikaner as well as British miners engaged in many industrial struggles, and the British miners were closely linked to and influenced by the militant union movement of Britain. But the volatility of gold prices meant the mine owners needed cheaper labour, and had no need to protect the white workers. For a while, they imported indentured Asian labour but, in the long run, saw their future in superexploiting black peasant labour.

So during the 1910s and 1920s, you see the leadership of a white working class attempting to fight to preserve its privileges on the backs of the black masses. The 1920s was a time of changing economic relations. Over time the rural Afrikaners, who had been a factor in the mines, eventually moved into the state-protected apparatus. After outbursts of bloody state repression of rearguard white mineworker strikes, the ruling-class strategy developed into absorbing the white workers into the petty-bourgeoisie. Instead of the white workers being ground down into impoverishment, their relations to the means of production shifted into being the overseers, managers, supervisors and state bureaucrats. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie continued to deprive black people of the right to own land and levied taxes to compel more landless blacks to migrate into designated "locations" near metropolitan areas and become proletarianised. Brutally enforced pass systems were used to control this labour force.

### The Impact of World War I

On the eve of World War I, in South Africa as in the rest of the world, there was tremendous ferment among sections of the workers and oppressed. At the same time, the war highlighted, in South Africa like in Europe, the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism and labour reformism. There were rebellions among various sectors of the South African population on the eve of the war.

In 1913 there were uprisings and strikes of Indian workers across [the province of] KwaZulu-Natal. They struck in the mines and cane fields, railways and shops. Mahatma Gandhi, who had been in South Africa since 1893, pleaded for passive resistance. Nevertheless, the cane workers clashed with police and workers were beaten and killed. Gandhi came to an agreement with the government during the Natal uprisings, and called the struggle of Indian workers off with little gains. On the Rand, in 1913 and 1914, the white gold miners led general strikes, and

# "The Bolsheviks Are Coming"

*The leaflet below was written in late 1918 by David Ivon Jones and L.H. Greene to rally "the workers of South Africa—black as well as white" behind the banner of the October Revolution and incipient workers revolution in Germany. It was issued in English, Zulu and Sotho by the International Socialist League, a predecessor of the Communist Party of South Africa, amid militant strikes in Durban, especially on the docks. The authors were arrested and convicted under the Moratorium (War Measure) and Riotous Assembly acts, although the convictions were later overturned. The leaflet, reprinted from* South African Communists Speak *(1981), refers to "Tommy Atkins" and "Blighty," which were World War I-era slang for British soldiers and Britain.*

A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Bolshevism!

What is this Bolshevism that the ruling class is so much afraid of?

Why do they send British Armies to Russia to fight the Bolsheviks?

Have they not had enough killing? Or is it a thirst for righteousness that makes them pack Tommy Atkins off to freeze in the snows of Archangel, just when he was looking forward to Home and Blighty?

The Czar massacred half a million nomads in Southern Russia in one swoop. They did not send an army against him.

Why then are they so scared of Bolshevism? Why do they turn pale at its shadow as at the ghosts of murdered men? Why?

We will tell you why!

The Great War of Nations is over, and the Class War against Labour has openly begun.

Bolshevism means the rule of the working class! And where the workers rule, the Capitalists cannot carry on their Robber System any more.

## A Campaign of Lies

Workers! Do not be misled when the Capitalist Press reviles the Bolsheviks. They slander the Bolsheviks because they have lost the fat money bags they lent to the Czar to crush the Russian people.

They slander the Bolsheviks because they have lost the rich mines and factories which the Russian workmen are now working for themselves; and the land, which forty million peasants are farming in common under the Soviet Republic.

They slander the Bolsheviks because they fear you will follow suit. They are afraid the workers in South Africa will also become free and independent.

They are losing their hair over Bolshevism because they see a prospect of losing their Profits.

## Bolshevism Means Labour on Top

The workers of Russia and Germany are forming themselves into Soviets—that is: Councils of Workmen.

They are taking over the control of the country into their own hands—the hands of the great wage-earning proletariat. That means the end of the Profiteering System, the end of the Capitalist exploitation of wage-labour for profit.

Why have the workers of Russia and Germany to shed their blood?

Because the Capitalist Class of all countries will sooner tear the people to pieces with their cannon rather than let the people rule. The workers are the people.

Remember the massacre of the workers in Johannesburg in 1913 and in [the city of] Bloemfontein last February!

Down with British Militarism! It is a weapon to crush the workers.

Down with Allied intervention in Russia!!

Down with the Capitalist Class in all countries!!!

The hope of the workers is coming from Bolshevism. The free commonwealth of labour is an actual fact in Russia today.

Bolshevism means the victory of the wage-earners. It will soon spread to Britain, France, America and throughout the world.

Get Ready for the World-wide Republic of Labour.

The way to get ready is to combine in the workshops. Combine as workers, no matter what colour.

Remember that an injury to one is an injury to all, be he black or white.

While the black worker is oppressed, the white worker cannot be free.

Before Labour can emancipate itself black workers as well as white must combine in one organisation of Labour, irrespective of craft, colour or creed.

This is Bolshevism: The Solidarity of Labour.

*Workers of the World Unite!*

***You have nothing to lose but your Chains. You have a world to Win!!***

the government killed over 20 people to put the first strike down, and deported nine trade-union leaders to put the second down. In Jagersfontein diamond mine, Sotho [South African ethnic group] miners went on strike when a white overseer kicked a black miner to death, and eleven miners were killed in the subsequent struggle. In Cape Town, 600 coloured [mixed-race] stevedores struck for an 8-hour day and wage increases.

The existing misleaders of the workers and oppressed were busy lining up support for the first interimperialist war on the side of the British overlords of South Africa. During World War I Gandhi urged Indians in South Africa to join the British army. As described by Jack and Ray Simons in *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950* (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1983), Gandhi earlier argued that passive resistance was "best for 'illiterate natives.' It taught them to break their own heads and not other people's in order to redress grievances."

After a brief moment of hesitation on the eve of the war, the South African Labour Party signed up for the war no less enthusiastically than the mine owners' Unionist Party. Colonel Frederic Creswell, the leader of the Labour Party, enlisted and called for support to the war in a manifesto titled "See It Through."

In the Western Cape, the African Political Organisation (APO, renamed the African People's Organisation in 1919), the main political voice of the coloureds, had tremendous illusions that the British imperialists would influence their South African counterparts to drop the colour bar, and hoped that if coloureds supported the war effort, they would be rewarded for their loyalty.

Days before Britain declared war in 1914, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, president of the APO, proclaimed, "The present foundation of the Empire is rotten, and cannot last." Weeks later he said, "The only question we have to ask ourselves is how we can best serve the Empire" (*Class and Colour in South Africa*).

In 1912 the South African Native National Congress [SANNC], predecessor of the African National Congress, was founded by lawyers, church-trained intellectuals and tribal chiefs. Their reaction to the outbreak of World War I was to cancel a meeting to discuss opposition to the 1913 Natives Land Act which dispossessed the majority of the black population, and instead to organise recruitment of blacks into the British army.

International Institute for Social History

**Petrograd, July 1920: Delegates at Second Congress of Communist International, at which International Socialist League application for affiliation was recorded.**

David Ivon Jones, secretary in the South African Labour Party and later a leader of the CPSA, adamantly opposed the interimperialist war. When the editor of the SANNC newspaper proposed a motion of condolence on the death of British Lord Kitchener at a public meeting in 1916, Jones opposed this, stating that Kitchener "was the agent of the class who exploit both native and white working class and encompass the death of millions of our fellow workers" (Baruch Hirson and Gwyn A. Williams, *The Delegate for Africa: David Ivon Jones 1883-1924* [Core Publications, 1995]). Kitchener was the military architect of British imperialism across the African continent from Sudan to South Africa.

## Internationalism and the Struggle for Black Liberation

David Ivon Jones and Sidney Percival Bunting, both immigrants from the British Isles who were central party leaders, were the outspoken antiwar leaders. In September 1914, Bunting and a small group of oppositionists to British imperialism in the South African Labour Party formed the "War on War League." They were not pacifists but revolutionary defeatists. They called for socialist revolution to bring down all contenders in the imperialist carving up of the world. After leaving the Labour Party, they formed the International Socialist League (ISL). Bunting immediately made the link between working-class internationalism and solidarity with the non-whites of South Africa. Their solidarity with the struggles of coloureds, blacks and Indians in many ways had made them as anathema to the Labour Party as their antiwar positions.

They distributed works of Marx, Engels and Daniel De Leon, a leading American Marxist. Even before the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, their newspaper enthusiastically cited German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht and comrades in Russia as fellow opponents of the imperialist war. In September 1915, they put out propaganda on the need for a new International. They were ignorant of the struggles by Lenin within the Zimmerwald conference [held in Switzerland in September 1915] for an anti-imperialist opposition to the war. At their first conference in January 1916, they voted to affiliate with the Zimmerwaldian International Socialist Commission in Switzerland as a manifestation of the beginning of a new International.

Simultaneously, Bunting confronted the new group with the race question in South Africa. It was and continued to be the key test of whether they had broken from the white-supremacist programme of the Labour Party. Bunting proposed that the League "affirm that the emancipation of the working class requires the abolition of all forms of native indenture, compound and passport systems; and the lifting of the native worker to the political and industrial status of the white" (quoted in Allison Drew, *Between Empire*

*continued on page 9*


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# Black Struggle, the Vietnamese Revolution and the Working Class

Le Minh Trùong

Intercontinental Press

**NLF guerrilla fighter in Mekong Delta, 1973 (left). Heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants inflicted humiliating defeat on U.S. imperialist colossus. May 1968 general strike: Workers at Renault plant near Paris reject union bureaucrats' sellout agreement with government (right).**

# From 1960s New Left to Trotskyism

## Recollections of a Participant

*We print below the second part of a presentation, slightly edited for publication, by Spartacist League speaker Diana Coleman at an October 15 forum in Los Angeles. Part One appeared in* WV *No. 990 (11 November).*

At the same time that Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was growing, the ghettos were exploding. With the civil rights movement unable to change the hellish conditions of black life in the North, there was a rising level of frustrated expectations. There were a whole series of ghetto upheavals in the mid to late '60s that were repressed with extreme police/National Guard violence. Young militants were breaking from the Democratic Party and the liberal pacifism of MLK. The Black Panthers (BPP) were

*PART TWO*

the best of a generation of young black activists who courageously stood up to the racist ruling class and its kill-crazy cops. Unfortunately, the Panthers, along with most of the New Left, rejected the organized working class as the agent of black freedom and socialist revolution. The Panthers looked to black ghetto youth as the vanguard of black struggle.

The underlying ideology of the Panthers was that the most oppressed are the most revolutionary. But in fact the lumpenproletariat in the ghetto, removed from the means of production, has no real social power. The Panthers' glorification of ghetto rage and rejection of the Marxist understanding of the role of the working class left them more vulnerable to state repression. They faced a systematic government campaign of assassination, police provocations, frame-ups and imprisonment, including through the FBI's notorious Counter-Intelligence Program. Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Panther and talented journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," has been on death row on frame-up charges for decades now. In the face of this repression, the Panthers turned to the right, into the orbit of the reformist Communist Party (CP), its lawyers and concomitantly the Democratic Party.

But let me give some quotes from Black Panther leader David Hilliard's speech to an antiwar demo in San Francisco in the fall of 1969. It says something that by '69 and '70 the speakers at these mass marches included a Black Panther *and* the Democratic mayor of SF. Hilliard says he had been warned by the BPP leadership not to curse and not to get mad because that would alienate the white liberals, but as you can see he did both. Like Hilliard, I usually try not to curse in speeches, but I will read this quote as it appeared in Phil Foner's *The Black Panthers Speak* (1995):

> "There's too many American flags out here and our Minister of Information, Eldridge Cleaver, says that the American flag and the American eagle are the true symbols of fascism....
> "So then, we would like to ask the American people do they want peace in Vietnam. Well, do you? (audience) 'Yes.' Do you want peace in the Black communities? (audience) 'Yes.' Well you goddamned sure can't get it with no guitars, you sure can't get it demonstrating. The only way you're going to get peace in Vietnam is to withdraw the oppressive forces from the Black communities right here in Babylon."

As the crowd became restive and some started to boo, Hilliard got mad:

> "We say down with the American fascist society. Later for Richard Milhous Nixon, the m-----f----r. Later for all the pigs of the power structure. Later for all the people out here that don't want to hear me curse.... Because Richard Nixon is an evil man. This is the m----- f----r that unleashed the counter-insurgent teams upon the BPP.... This is the man that sends his vicious murderous dogs out into the Black community.... We will kill Richard Nixon. We will kill any m----- f----r that stands in the way of our freedom. We ain't here for no goddamned peace, because we know that we can't have no peace because this country was built on war. And if you want peace you got to fight for it."

While the liberals were booing, my friends and I were cheering his opposition to pacifism. The Panthers had become broadly popular. There was a real convergence between the white left and the black left. Black people are not a separate nation but an integral part of American class society while at the same time forcibly segregated at the bottom as a race-color caste. Hilliard was subsequently brought up on charges for threatening the life of the president. Later the charges were dropped—perhaps because it was obvious that no one plans an assassination attempt in a speech in front of upward of 150,000 people in Golden Gate Park!

Bettmann

**1 May 1969: National Guard breaks up New Left UC Berkeley protest demanding return of People's Park.**

### The Limits of Student Radicalism

Just as the Panthers came up against the dead end of their lumpen vanguard strategy, SDS came up against the dead end of student vanguardism. As I said earlier, the New Left had been very anti-working-class. Trotsky's biographer Isaac Deutscher, who considered himself a classical Marxist, toured the U.S. in 1966, speaking at Vietnam antiwar protests. He was appalled by the intellectual elitism he found among young radicals who considered themselves anti-capitalist. Deutscher said:

> "Do you really take such a contemptuous view of your working classes that you think that you alone are so sensitive or so noble as to be dissatisfied with this degrading society and that they cannot find it in themselves to be dissatisfied? Do you really believe that they are so much more prone, and by nature conditioned, to be corrupted by the meretricious advantages of this war-flourishing capitalism than you are?"

Well, that is pretty much what many did think. Deutscher also said something to the effect that he would exchange all the peace marches for one good dockworkers strike. Most of the New Left didn't understand that, either.

What happened was that the very success of the student strikes demonstrated their impotence. In the spring of 1970, President Nixon ordered American troops in South Vietnam into neighboring Cambodia. In the ensuing campus protests, the Ohio National Guard killed four students at Kent State. Ten days later, cops killed two black students at Jackson State. Of course, the second murderous assault didn't get as much coverage, black life being cheap for the bourgeoisie, then as now. These events triggered protests involving four and a half million students—half the U.S. student population—and many colleges remained shut through the rest of the semester. But this did not stop the Vietnam War.

If this protest demonstrated the impotence of "student power," the May-June 1968 events in France demonstrated the actual power of the working class. Leftist student protest there triggered a workers general strike that shook the de Gaulle regime to its core. France was engulfed in

a pre-revolutionary crisis that the French CP barely managed to stabilize and sell out. The incipient workers revolution in France reaffirmed in real life the revolutionary potential of the working class. This made a lot of us think twice, especially since there was a strike wave in the U.S. in '69 and '70—a General Electric strike, a nationwide postal wildcat strike (the first major strike against the federal government), a Midwest Teamsters wildcat and a General Motors strike.

Needless to say, this was not news to the Spartacist League. As Marxists, the SL understands that the motor force of history is the class struggle—today between the capitalist class and the proletariat. The capitalists own the means of production like the land, mines and factories, while the workers have nothing but their labor power, which they sell to the capitalists in order to live. Because the working class turns the wheels of production, it has the social power and the organization to overthrow the capitalist rulers. But the working class has to understand its power in order to use it. For that you need a revolutionary vanguard party that can bring communist consciousness to the proletariat.

A key prop of capitalism is to keep the working class divided along ethnic and racial lines, which in this country means foremost the segregation of black people. The SL fights for black freedom on the program of revolutionary integrationism: the working class must fight against all instances of racist oppression and discrimination, while at the same time genuine equality for black people in the U.S. will only come about through socialist revolution that smashes capitalism. There will be no socialist revolution without the working class taking up the fight for black freedom.

Our model is the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the October Revolution in Russia in 1917. This was the greatest victory for the working people of the world: it gave the program of proletarian revolution flesh and blood. The proletariat seized power and created a workers state based on collectivized property and soviets (workers councils). The young workers state eliminated laws discriminating against women and homosexuals and recognized the right to self-determination of the many nations oppressed under tsarist/capitalist rule. The Soviet government proclaimed the right of working people to jobs, health care, housing and education.

The Russian Revolution was not made solely for Russia but was seen as the opening shot of a necessarily international struggle of labor against the rule of capital. It was an inspiration to the oppressed masses of the world and had a direct impact on the struggle of black people in the U.S. The American rulers have always seen a connection between the Russian Revolution and the struggles of black people in the U.S.—and rightly so. The Bolshevik Revolution was popular among wide layers of urban blacks and even among moderate black newspapers and organizations of the time. "Black and Red" is the American bourgeoisie's greatest fear.

The SL attempted to convey some of this understanding in various leaflets written at the time and in sporadic interventions into SDS. In 1967, as young radicals turned to confrontation with the cops, the SL wrote: "Personal sacrifice can never substitute for a mass movement... this does not mean reverting to the simple pacifist humanitarianism of the official peace movement in order to get middle-class liberals on the picket line. What it does mean is tapping the fundamental discontent and conflicts in American society; the black ghetto uprisings and rash of militant strikes indicate the depth and explosiveness of this discontent."

Pirkle Jones

Stewart/Bethel

**Left: Black Panther leader David Hilliard, 1968. Right: Marching Panthers give black power salute, 1969.**

The SL fought for a one-day general strike and raised the slogan: "Labor strikes against the war!" The SL also controversially opposed the draft resistance campaign and insisted that *if drafted*, young radicals should go. In a position paper put forward in SDS, we argued that the voluntary purging of radicals from the army would only strengthen the ideological purity and political reliability of the army. We said that young militants should go with working-class and minority youth and continue their political agitation in the army.

## Stalinism Versus Trotskyism

Another question that the SL took up in this period was the question of Maoism-Stalinism. The New Left didn't want to deal with these old, musty debates, but these questions come after you. Stalinism versus Trotskyism, the nature of the workers states—these questions cannot be avoided. SDS liberals of the mid 1960s were poring over Mao's "Little Red Book" of quotations by 1968.

One thing that caused this change was the tremendous authority of the Vietnamese Stalinists. They looked like they were going to and then *did* beat U.S. imperialism, and they made no bones about being old-line Stalinists. Since Ho Chi Minh didn't claim to have his own ideology, it was Maoism that was the beneficiary of New Leftists looking for some kind of "new" Marxism that would be more radical than old-line Soviet Stalinism and its practice of "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism, which meant betraying social and class struggles internationally. China was under the gun of U.S. imperialism, so the Chinese Communist Party leadership was talking more left at that moment.

On a sociological level, some of the Stalinists in the American Communist Party who hadn't simply quit to become liberals became Maoists—for example, Progressive Labor (PL)—and influenced the New Left. Maoism did not represent a break from Stalinist class collaboration but rather was what we called "Khrushchevism under the gun." (Khrushchev was the Soviet premier at the time.) Seeking to win young radicals to a Trotskyist program, the SL exposed the repeated attempts by the Chinese Maoists to form a reactionary anti-Soviet bloc with U.S. imperialism at the expense of social struggles around the world. This alliance was sealed by Mao's 1972 meeting with U.S. war criminal Richard Nixon in Beijing as American warplanes were raining death and destruction on Vietnam.

Magnum

**Mao welcomes Nixon to Beijing in 1972 as China seals anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism.**

In the article "NLF Program: Fetter on Victory" (*Spartacist* supplement, May 1968) about the National Liberation Front (NLF) the SL wrote:

> "There has been an understandable but nevertheless unfortunate tendency on the part of the American left to idealize Ho Chi Minh and the leadership of the NLF, and for radicals to turn their correct demands for military victory against imperialism and its puppets into uncritical political support for these leaders and their politics. This is a grave error, for not only do these would-be revolutionaries not understand the deformities of those they support—and are extremely likely to feel personally betrayed when the inevitable occurs—but are likely to carry over the Stalinist hallmarks of class-collaboration and murderous opportunism into the American revolutionary movement. It is vitally necessary to keep in mind that Ho Chi Minh and his co-thinkers have already sold out the Vietnamese revolution twice before."

This article also presciently predicted that in the best of circumstances the "NLF will simply bypass its program and will then set out to make a limited, distorted and bureaucratic revolution from the top." That is exactly what they did. And this is also why the SL began to raise my favorite slogan of all time: "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" This slogan cut not only against liberal pacifism at home but also against the limits of Vietnamese Stalinism. Uniquely on the left, today we uphold the same Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense and proletarian political revolution for the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and Laos.

And that point from the *Spartacist* article, about the carrying over of class collaborationism and opportunism into the American movement, was so true. One of my old friends went to a conference in Vancouver in '67 or '68 and met with Vietnamese women, not only women in the CP of Vietnam but also women combatants in the NLF of South Vietnam. Of course, she was very impressed by the presence of these women who were actually fighting U.S. imperialism with gun in hand. And, of course, the Americans wanted advice on how to build an American revolutionary movement.

But the Vietnamese kept steering the conversation away from that subject. Instead, all the Americans got were reformist clichés about building the biggest possible movement on the broadest possible basis—watch out when people start telling you that, it's code for class collaboration—and helping elect whomever would help end the war, i.e., the Democrats, who else. My friend was very disappointed by this, as were the people like myself whom she told this to. We couldn't figure it out and filed it away as one of those things that you better not think about too hard.

## The New Left Turns to the Working Class

I do want to give one example of the New Left meets the working class from my own history. In 1969, I was in a women's liberation group, and we were so impressed by the working-class struggle in France and so frustrated by student struggles and peace marches that we decided that we had to get out of Berkeley and organize the workers. We got together a group of men and women, husbands, boyfriends, friends in the movement (as it was called). We were planning on organizing white workers because we were very much imbued with the black nationalist idea of polyvanguardism—that blacks should organize blacks, whites should organize whites, and so on.

We did a demographic study of the Bay Area and decided that the place where we could find the most young white workers was Hayward. What a boring suburb, but we all moved there, 20 or 30 of us. Later, one of our people got a job at the General Motors auto plant in Fremont, and we decided that we would start a radical caucus there. We thought you had to do something flashy to get working people's attention, start off with a bang. So we printed up a leaflet about the birthday of BPP leader Huey Newton, which we thought was very appropriate to jolt white people out of their racism. And there were a lot of blacks working there, too, who probably *did* know who Huey Newton was.

Spartacist

**Mid 1960s civil rights demonstration in New York. During wave of ghetto explosions, Spartacists fought for militant defense of inner cities, sought to mobilize working-class solidarity.**

We took the plant's tour train with the leaflets stuffed under our coats. At a prearranged moment, we leapt off and ran around like maniacs, handing out leaflets and throwing them in the cars. Whether the workers were convinced by our politics, I don't know, but they thought it was wild. The bosses stopped every assembly line in the plant and proceeded to chase us around. Workers hid us and showed us where to go. They figured that as long as we were there the lines would stay down. Assembly line work is hard and boring, and we were an interesting diversion that had never been seen before. It took a long time before management could round us up. They didn't even think to stop us when we announced that we were leaving and walked out and got in our cars.

Meanwhile, during this exact period in '69, SDS was splitting due to the real inadequacy of New Left politics in the face of the general social crisis of the late 1960s. In the summer of 1969 at the SDS National Convention in Chicago, facing the prospect of PL's positions gaining a majority, a clique within the SDS National

*continued on page 8*

# New Left...

*(continued from page 7)*

Collective (NC), including Bernardine Dohrn and Mike Klonsky, engineered a split, lining up Black Panthers and others to race-bait PL supporters. When this didn't work, the NC splitters led their followers out of the conference.

The SL remained with the PL-led Worker-Student Alliance wing of SDS due to its orientation, however crude, to the proletariat. The SL referred to PL, more leftist at this time than now, as "Trotskyists with a prefrontal lobotomy." The SL issued position papers within SDS, arguing for a Leninist vanguard party to bring the power of the working class to bear in the interests of all the oppressed (reprinted in "'Racial Oppression and Working-Class Politics'," *WV* No. 897, 31 August 2007, and "'The Fight for Women's Liberation'," *WV* No. 910, 14 March 2008). PL was vulnerable to our Trotskyist criticism, but ultimately they clung to their "minimum/maximum program," combining "communist" rhetoric with reformist practice.

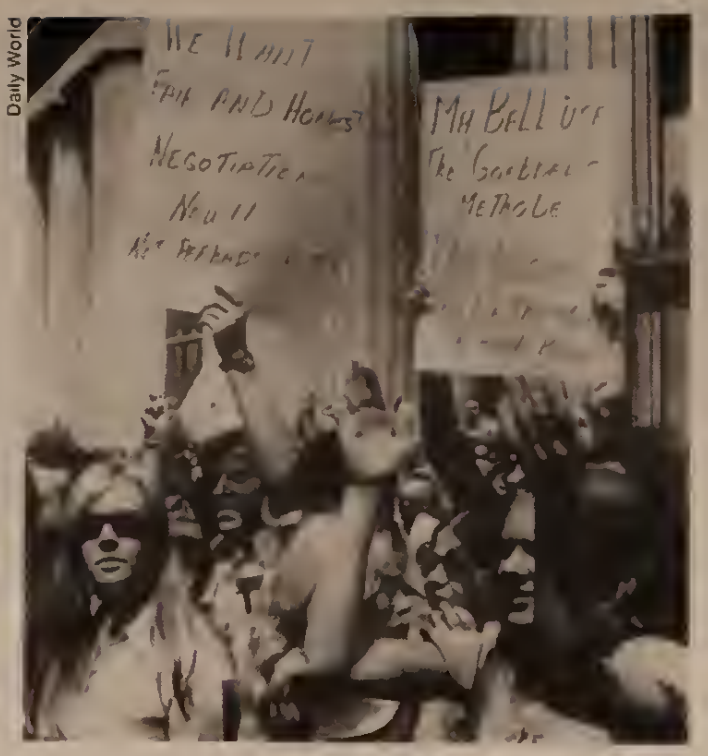
The SL's Trotskyist program won a hearing within SDS, and the forebear of today's Spartacus Youth Clubs was founded as the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC) in SDS in early 1970. The RMC sought to win radical students to a revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian communist program. This included fighting for an understanding of the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution and Trotsky's understanding of the material roots of its bureaucratic degeneration.

## The Futile Strategy of the Weathermen

Even in Hayward, we felt the effects of the SDS split. We had been organizing the working class for at least six months and had put out a ton of leaflets. Actually, there was more interest in our politics than you might imagine, the working class being very restive. We did some high school organizing at a working-class high school in Hayward. After passing out some leaflets protesting the war in Vietnam, we stood outside the school with a bullhorn and shouted: "Come out of your prisons!" The most surprising part was that several hundred did, and we led a march all over Hayward.

But some of the people in the Hayward Collective began to feel that the working class just wasn't responding sufficiently. So they got ahold of the Weathermen, who were part of the anti-PL side of the split in SDS. The Weathermen—named, I believe, after a Bob Dylan song which includes the line: "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows"—had a policy of confrontation with the armed forces of the state. They practiced terrorism in the name of Third World nationalism.

Lacking a proletarian strategy, and desperate to do something, the Weather Underground would conduct acts of individual terrorism that were self-defeating and, more times than not, far more dangerous to themselves than to the bourgeoisie. Such a program was no break from liberalism but a logical conclusion, in extremis, of the liberal program of bearing "moral witness" to government crimes. The Weathermen's strategy was futile. At the same time, their targets were representatives of imperialism and capitalist oppression. While politically opposing the Weathermen, the SL fought for their defense, insisting that they were "an integral part of the radical movement." The rest of the left turned its back on them.




**August 1971, New York: Striking telephone workers at AT&T headquarters. At its height, 400,000 CWA members were on strike nationally for higher wages.**

The Weathermen came to visit the Hayward Collective to win us to their variety of Third World nationalism, arguing that the American working class was totally bought off and could never make a socialist revolution. They presented their views, and then they sang us some songs. You think I'm kidding. Believe me, I'm not. First they sang, "We all live in a Weatherman machine" to the tune of "Yellow Suhmarine." Then they sang "Bad Moon Rising" by Creedence Clearwater Revival. "Looks like we're in for nasty weather" sort of captured their perspective. Those of us who believed in the revolutionary potential of the American working class decided maybe our theme song should be the Creedence song "Lodi" about the small, remote California town, as in "stuck in Lodi again" boring. This forum seems to include a lot of discussion about music—maybe it should have a soundtrack to go with it.

Since there was a minority of us who were not convinced, several others from our collective and I went to meet Bernardine Dohrn, a leader of the Weathermen who was on the "Ten Most Wanted" list in the U.S. I had seen her "Wanted" picture up in the local post office. We were supposed to meet on Telegraph Avenue in front of Cody's Bookstore. Dohrn was late, and everyone was worried. She claimed that she had been up the street stealing a pair of earrings. Meeting in such a public place as Telegraph Avenue was dumb enough, but even I thought *that* was crazy when you were underground. But it was all a part of the "outlaw" image.

Finally, we sat down to meet, and she asked me what I was going to do when the North Koreans sailed in to Puget Sound, presumably to take over since the American working class was supposed to be so bought off. Perhaps not answering this on a very deep level—and I was kind of intimidated since she was a big shot—I just said that I didn't think that was going to happen. She said that just showed what an American-chauvinist racist I was. So I didn't join the Weathermen, and Dohrn and her hubby Bill Ayers eventually went back to Chicago, where they hang out in liberal circles and know such unsavory people as Barack Obama.

## Breaking with Feminism

The women, two others and myself, who didn't join the Weathermen then began a sort of feminist working-class organizing collective in East Oakland together with women we had known from the Berkeley Women's Liberation group and others. Why we became more feminist, since the Hayward Collective certainly did not split along gender lines, I'm not quite sure. In any case, we had our East Oakland Women's Collective, and we worked with other women to set up a citywide Oakland Women's Liberation Group, which probably included a couple hundred women over the years. I was among those who went to work in a glass-bottle-blowing factory in East Oakland, and others went to work as operators at the phone company. There are a million more ridiculous stories from this period—"socialist feminists meet the working class"—but you don't want to be here until midnight.

At the phone company, we saw in living color where feminism led—that is, right across the class line. We were radical feminists with a working-class bent, but the bottom line is that Marxism and feminism are counterposed. Feminism is a bourgeois ideology that asserts that the main division in society is between men and women rather than class versus class. Its logic is that all women have more in common with each other than they do with men, regardless of class. Feminism is politically incapable of resolving the most basic aspects of women's oppression because it functions entirely within the framework of bourgeois rule. In contrast, Marxism looks to the power of the working class as the motor force for social progress. The private property system, backed by the capitalist state, and the family are the most basic and deeply intertwined aspects of class society. They cannot be "reformed" away. The inescapable conclusion is that the entire capitalist system must go.

Our collective was working through the Operators Defense Committee, which featured an eclectic combination of New Left, Maoist and workerist politics, with a heavy overlay of feminism and male exclusionism. But we were quite shaken up when there was a strike of electrical workers, who were mostly men, at the phone company. We saw that many of the women whom we had helped to recruit to women's consciousness were recruiting others to *cross* the picket lines, using all the feminist arguments we had told them. "Well, we're more oppressed, what have they ever done to fight for women's rights? So, therefore, it's OK to cross the picket line." We were horrified. We were somewhat ambiguous on unions, but we knew one thing: you never cross a picket line. We had been following a feminist strategy of organizing women around their own oppression, and it didn't lead them to a broader understanding or socialist consciousness. It led to strikebreaking.

There was a Spartacist-supported caucus in the Communications Workers of America (CWA) called the Militant Action Caucus (MAC). The MAC was based on class-struggle politics and a series of transitional demands, which are designed to link current consciousness to the necessity of the conquest of power by the proletariat. Over a period of a couple of years, culminating in the 1971 national CWA strike, we were able to test out in action our feminist strategy versus the revolutionary strategy of the SL and the class-struggle politics of the MAC. Having had some negative experiences with other groups like PL and the Revolutionary Union (predecessor of the Revolutionary Communist Party), I came grudgingly to the conclusion that only the Trotskyists of the SL seemed to know how to do working-class organizing.

Finally, even in the feminist Oakland Women's Liberation Group, the dreaded question of Maoism versus Trotskyism came up when we helped set up what was essentially a Marxist study group. With some push from women around the SL, Trotskyist works like *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* by Harold Isaacs were included as readings. What an eye-opener! Stalinism led to the bloody defeat of the Chinese Revolution of the late 1920s and betrayed many other revolutionary opportunities, as did Maoism. All that Maoist class collaborationism, the belief that in the underdeveloped countries you should work with your own bourgeoisie—whether called the "bloc of four classes" or the "united front against imperialism"—could no longer be ignored. Trotsky's program of permanent revolution really is the only alternative to placing confidence in the backward, imperialist-dependent bourgeoisie of an oppressed country as the vehicle for liberation.

A bunch of us East Oakland women, after hard, sometimes bruising, political discussions with the SL, decided in the summer of 1972 that we needed to join an internationalist Leninist vanguard party, embodied, at least in its nucleus, in the SL. Our eclectic wanderings on the path to Leninism are mainly important in the context of the SL's call in 1969 for revolutionary regroupment. Here the Spartacist League called for "political and theoretical polarization of the ostensibly revolutionary groupings, leading ultimately to a left-communist regroupment of all organizations, factions, tendencies and individuals who stand on an anti-revisionist Marxist program, toward the formation of a Leninist vanguard party."

What was proposed was not a nonaggression pact but, if anything, an intensification of political struggle. This perspective embodied the Leninist conception that a party is built through a series of splits and fusions. It worked. The SL tripled in size between 1971 and 1974, regrouping with subjectively revolutionary elements breaking from Maoism, Socialist Workers Party (SWP) reformism and New Leftism: for example, the Communist Working Collective of L.A., the Buffalo Marxist Caucus, elements of the Leninist Faction of the SWP and the Mass Strike group in Boston, as well as assorted feminists and former black nationalists, among others.

Today is not 1972, and there aren't many subjectively revolutionary organizations or groupings around. I don't think we are going to regroup with "Occupy Wall Street," and there don't seem to be any inchoate revolutionary tendencies in the International Socialist Organization or Workers World Party. Recruitment of thoughtful, unusual individuals is the order of the day, and it is hard mental work. But things change, capitalism breeds class struggle. However, the precondition for a socialist revolution is a party. As Trotsky said in *Lessons of October* (1924): "Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer." We urge you to join us in the struggle to build the party necessary to lead international proletarian revolution. ■

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# South Africa...

*(continued from page 5)*

*and Revolution: A Life of Sidney Bunting, 1873-1936* [Pickering & Chatto, 2007]). But at this meeting Bunting's motion was amended by others in the group to include a reactionary call for preventing the increase of numbers of black wage workers, and this version passed.

Bunting and Jones, as leaders and editors of the ISL, continually carried on a fight to incorporate demands for blacks among their small membership. In their newspaper *The International*, Jones wrote:

> "If the League deal resolutely in consonance with socialist principles with the native question, it will succeed in shaking South African capitalism to its foundations. Then, and not till then shall we be able to talk about the South African proletariat in International relations. Not till we free the Native can we hope to free the white."
>
> —"The Parting of the Ways," 1 October 1915 (reprinted in *South African Communists Speak, 1915-1980* [Inkululeko Publications, 1981])

Bunting and Jones were often alone. The ISL invited black men and leaders of the Native Congress to ISL meetings, which led them to get expelled from the Trades Hall [in Johannesburg] in late 1917. Bunting used the expulsion as an opportunity to denounce the racist Labourites. He hated and condemned all who called themselves socialists and claimed to support the 1917 Russian Revolution, but did not support black African struggle. In April 1919 he wrote in *The International*: "It is humiliating to have to keep on emphasising that the essence of the Labour movement is Solidarity, without which it cannot win. The outstanding characteristic of the capitalist system in South Africa being its Native labour, the outstanding movement of the country must clearly be the movement of its Native labourers" (quoted in Edward Roux, *S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography* [Mayibuye Books, 1993]).

Through the ISL conferences of this period and the early 1920s Bunting and Jones wrote articles and repeatedly introduced motions and theses calling for special attention to black workers in all sorts of ways: for classes to be instituted, for leaflets to be addressed to them, for incorporating demands for the right to vote, organise, end pass laws, etc. In late 1918 the ISL published a leaflet written by Jones titled "The Bolsheviks Are Coming" [see page 5], which was translated into Zulu and Sotho. He combined solidarity with the Bolshevik Revolution with the necessity to emancipate the black workers—he ended by saying that this is Bolshevism—that black and white workers combine in one organisation irrespective of craft, colour or creed. In Jones and Bunting's break from social democracy to international working-class revolution, they applied their understanding of Marxism to the inseparable fight for black liberation and socialist revolution in South Africa.

The pages of *The International*, the ISL newspaper, were filled with solidarity with the Russian Revolution. Jones was prescient in March 1917 when he wrote about the February Russian Revolution that overthrew the tsar. He hailed the Russian workers as the vanguard of world revolution: "this is a bourgeois revolution, but arriving when the night of capitalism is far spent. It cannot be a mere repetition of previous revolutions" ("170 Million Recruits," *The International*, 23 March 1917). They serialised the manifesto of the First Congress of the Communist International in 1919 and they sought to affiliate with the Third International born out of the workers revolution.

In 1919 Bunting wrote a scathing denunciation of the Johannesburg white municipal workers strike which the workers called the "Johannesburg soviet." He called it ironically a "White 'Soviet'," and attacked it for its racist hypocritical indiffcrence to black workers. In February 1920 some 70,000 black miners went on strike, and Bunting wrote appeals to white workers to support their struggle.

**Leaders of South African Native National Congress, forebear of ANC, 1914.**

## The Industrial Workers of Africa

One other effort of the ISL I want to mention before I get on to the formation of the CPSA is the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA), founded in October 1917 and modelled on the American syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. The slogan of this all-in industrial organisation became "*Sifuna Zonke*" ("We want all"). They distributed their leaflets in Zulu and Sotho. As described by Jones in his March 1921 report to the Comintern, "Communism in South Africa": "The native workers of the IWA quickly grasped the difference between their trade union and the Congress [SANNC] and waged a merciless war of invective at the joint meetings of their Union with the Congress against the black-coated respectables of the Congress" (reprinted in *South African Communists Speak*).

In this period they also planned to publish in Hindi and Tamil in Durban, and they organised coloured garment workers in Kimberley. One of these people in Kimberley was Johnny Gomas, who later became a Cape Town union organiser and leader of the Communist Party.

James P. Cannon, a founder of the American Communist Party and later Trotskyist leader, makes the point in *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (1962) that it took the intervention of the Comintern under Lenin to force the American communists to take up the black question. Cannon says that the best of the early American socialists, Eugene Debs, could only say that the Socialist Party was "the party of the whole working class, regardless of color." It took the authority of the Russian Revolution to fight with the American communists against their "colour blindness" and to pay attention to the special oppression of blacks, just as the Bolsheviks had championed oppressed nationalities. Armed with the lessons of the Russian Revolution, the American communists took up black oppression as a special question of American capitalism, and they became the foremost champions of black liberation and recruited blacks to the party.

During the course of the rise of American capitalism, the origins of black oppression in chattel slavery led to blacks becoming a race-colour caste. This is very different from South Africa where black oppression originated in colonial subjugation and national oppression. However, the comparison I want to make is that the assimilation of the lessons of the Russian Revolution would have directly guided the early CPSA. Jones, Bunting and later Eddie Roux were inspired by the Russian Revolution. Although they were physically distant from the Comintern, they grasped the centrality of the fight against black oppression, and this manifested itself in their perseverance in making the Communist Party a mass black party. But they never developed a theoretical framework to this question as it applied to South Africa. And it became more and more impossible for them to develop a programme as the Comintern degenerated into more a tool of the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy rather than an organising centre for world revolution, as it was under Lenin and Trotsky.

## Founding of the CPSA

In January 1920, the ISL resolved to affiliate with the Third International and sent their rules and constitution to "convince you that our policy is on all fours with that of Communist parties of Europe and elsewhere" (quoted in *South African Communists Speak*). Apparently the application was read and applauded at the Second Congress of the Comintern.

In 1921 they pulled together various groupings from Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg and other places and formed the Communist Party. Their membership was almost all English-speaking immigrants. They debated adopting the "21 Conditions" of the Second Congress of the Comintern. Their agreement with the Comintern's programmatic conditions for entry caused some of the syndicalists and others who refused to support the dictatorship of the proletariat to part ways.

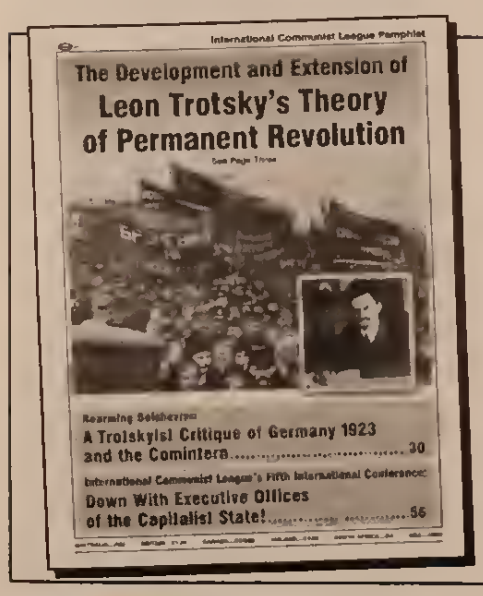
Jones's "Communism in South Africa" was presented on behalf of the ISL and used as the basic report on South Africa for the Third Congress of the Comintern in June 1921, which he attended. Jones initiated a motion to devote serious attention to the Negro question as a separate question of importance.

The report reflects his sensitivity to the horrendous conditions of blacks. He tries to inform the Comintern of the unique social and political groupings that make up the country. Jones denounces the Native Congress for its timid pro-government programme and its fear of the masses, and predicts that class-based organisations will dominate in South Africa. The "national and class interests of the natives cannot be distinguished the one from the other." What comes out strongly is Jones's desire to bring the question of black oppression to the forefront of the International. He appeals for reinforcements, and for the South African movement to come more into the purview of the Third International. He writes: "The white movement dominates our attention, because the native workers' movement moves only spasmodically and is neglected. It requires a special department, with native linguists and newspapers. All of which require large funds, which are not available." His final remarks are that "African natives are ripe for the message of the Communist International."

The party remained divided as to whether their purpose should be to address white workers and about admitting black members. After Jones left South Africa in 1920 to spend his final days in the Soviet Union, Bunting continued almost alone to push the party toward the black masses.

In October 1922 Bunting wrote a document called "The 'Colonial' Labour Front" (reprinted in *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A Documentary History*, Volume 1, edited by Allison Drew [Mayibuye Books, 1996]). It takes on the relation of national oppression to class based on the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International. This document tries to explain how the bourgeoisie splits the workers of the imperialist countries from workers in the colonial countries, that racism has an economic basis. And he argues that the task of the communist parties is to bridge the divisions between white and black labour, between the workers of the imperialist and colonial countries. He says that national liberation struggles must not "postpone" labour action; particularly in places like South Africa there is no real national liberation movement or peasant movement to link up with. He quotes from the Supplementary Theses on the National Question of the Second Congress (1920): "we must in any case struggle against control by bourgeois democratic national movements over the mass action of poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from all sorts of exploitation."

[TO BE CONTINUED]


International Communist League pamphlet comprising three articles from ICL press: "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution," "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern" and "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!" These articles together constitute an introduction to the historically founded principles and program of Trotskyism (i.e., genuine Marxism).

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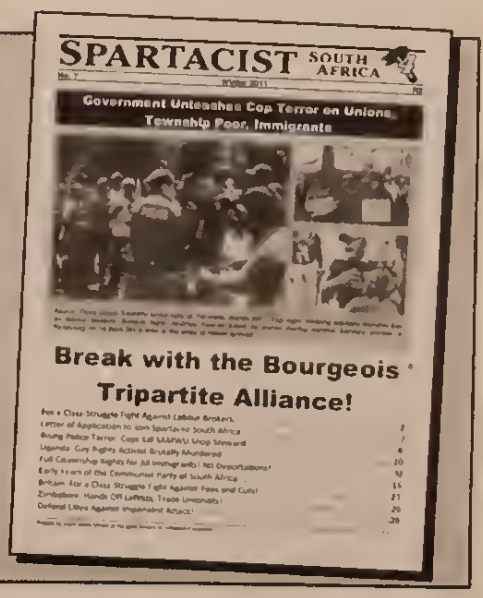


# Iran...

*(continued from page 1)*

It was the U.S. that incinerated some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The U.S. ruling class that is today threatening Iran is the same obscenely rich capitalist class that gorges itself on profits while busting unions, throwing millions out of work, slashing social services, destroying health care and stealing pensions—attacks that hit particularly hard at the black masses segregated at the bottom of society. In opposing the U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and other imperialist adventures, we raise the call for class struggle at home, promoting the understanding of the need to mobilize the proletariat to sweep away the murderous imperialist order through socialist revolution.

Although the Obama administration is seeking—at least for now—to rein in Israel and head off an immediate military attack on Iran, support for such an action has been growing within U.S. ruling circles, and not only in *Wall Street Journal* editorials and the speeches of Zionist neocons. A sign of the broader "bomb Iran" sentiment was an exchange between strategists for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), which includes former officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, and others from the Council on Foreign Relations.

Reuters

**April 2004: Mordechai Vanunu leaves prison after serving 18 years for disclosing Israel's massive nuclear stockpile.**

WV Photo

**New York, March 2007: Spartacist banner at antiwar demo.**

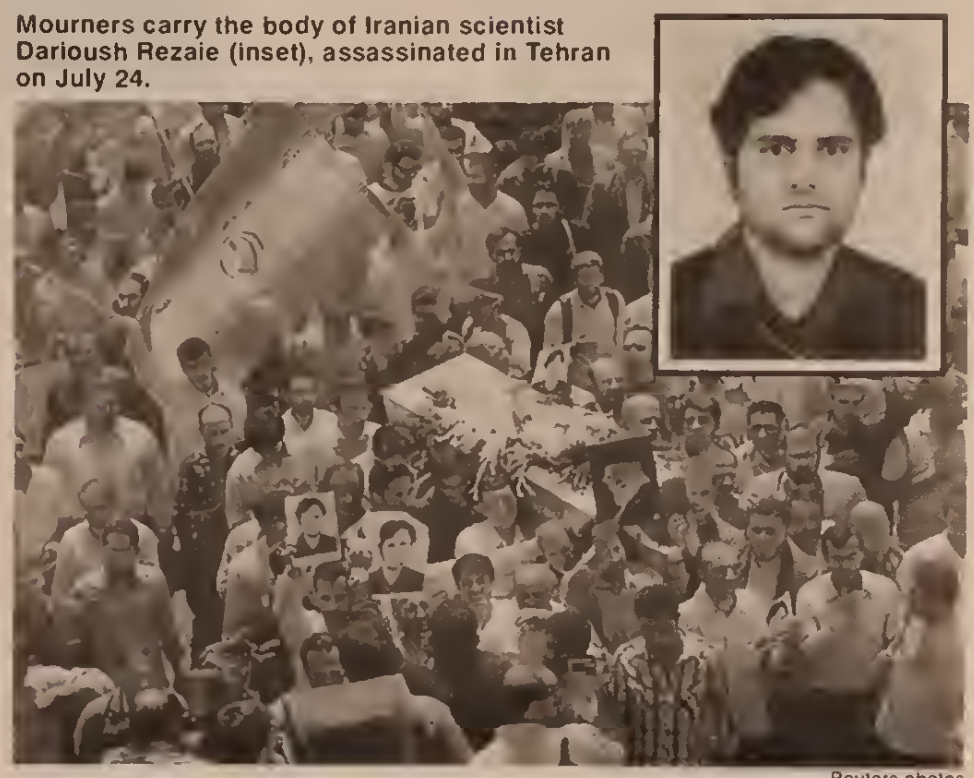
CFR spokesmen argued in *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2010) that, in the event Iran succeeded in developing nukes, the U.S. should threaten to attack with any means, "including nuclear weapons," if Tehran crossed certain "redlines," such as "initiation of conventional warfare against other countries" or "stepped-up support for terrorist or subversive activities." Initially, the CSBA authors argued a more restrained line of keeping up the current policy of sanctions and military pressure (*Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2011). Yet one day after the November 8 IAEA report, the same CSBA authors posted a statement online titled: "Why Obama Should Take Out Iran's Nuclear Program: The Case for Striking Before It's Too Late."

It takes some chutzpah for the U.S. rulers, echoed by imperialist Britain and France, to rail against Iran possibly acquiring nuclear weapons. The U.S. capitalists possess enough nuclear firepower to destroy humanity many times over. The atomic bombing of Japan, which was ultimately meant as a warning to the Soviet Union, epitomized the role of the U.S. rulers as the greatest menace to the workers and oppressed the world has known. That act of imperialist barbarism has been followed by a long line of wars and military operations, from Korea and Vietnam—where the U.S. failed to reverse social revolutions—to Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya more recently. The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state by capitalist counterrevolution two decades ago removed what had been the chief military and diplomatic obstacle to the imperialists' pursuit of their global ambitions.

The U.S. funnels billions in aid every year to Zionist Israel, whose existence is predicated on the displacement and brutal oppression of the Palestinian people. The Zionist rulers have transformed Gaza into a concentration camp for Palestinians, surrounded by an electric fence, a wall and the Mediterranean, while forcibly ghettoizing the West Bank Palestinians as well. Surrounded by Arab populations, Israel's rulers consider themselves to be in a permanent state of war and have repeatedly shown their willingness to use military force.

Israel got its start as a nuclear-armed power with the aid of France, which in 1958 built the reactor for the Dimona nuclear facility in the Negev desert. The U.S. subsequently provided support for Israel's nuclear program while shielding it from international scrutiny, helping to maintain a veil over the extent of Israel's stockpile of nukes. In 1986, Mordechai Vanunu, a former technician at Dimona, pulled back the veil, revealing that Israel had acquired an arsenal of some 200 nuclear warheads. For his heroic exposure of the scope and scale of Tel Aviv's doomsday machine, which targeted the USSR as well as nations in the Near East, Vanunu was convicted of treason and sentenced to 18 years in prison, eleven of those spent in solitary confinement. Forbidden to leave Israel since his release in 2004, Vanunu was twice again arrested

**Mourners carry the body of Iranian scientist Darioush Rezaie (inset), assassinated in Tehran on July 24.**



Reuters photos

# PDC...

*(continued from page 3)*

courts have repeatedly refused to hear this overwhelming evidence.

While others plead with the current U.S. president and his attorney general to "investigate" violations of Mumia's "civil rights," the PDC says that Mumia's fate cannot be left in the hands of the government of the capitalists. The racist rulers hate Mumia because they see in him the spectre of black revolt. The stakes are high and the situation is grim, but any real fight for Mumia's freedom must be based on class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers, who have entombed this innocent black man for more than half his life.

**Leonard Peltier** is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier's incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier's frame-up trial, for the 1975 deaths of two marauding FBI agents in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation, shows what capitalist "justice" is all about. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents," and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 67-year-old Peltier is still locked away. This year, Peltier, who suffers from multiple serious medical conditions, was thrown into solitary confinement and then transferred to Florida, far from his family. He is not scheduled to be reconsidered for parole for another 13 years.

Eight **MOVE** members—**Chuck Africa**, **Michael Africa**, **Debbie Africa**, **Janet Africa**, **Janine Africa**, **Delbert Africa**, **Eddie Africa** and **Phil Africa**—are in their 34th year in prison. They were sentenced to 30 to 100 years after the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops

Jericho Movement

**Delbert Africa**

in collaboration with the Feds. After more than three decades of unjust incarceration, most of these innocent prisoners had parole hearings this year, but none were released.

**Lynne Stewart** is a radical lawyer incarcerated for defending her client, a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. Last year, she was resentenced to ten years, more than quadrupling her earlier sentence, in a loud affirmation by the Obama administration that there will be no let-up in the massive attack on democratic rights under the "war on terror." Stewart, now over 72 years old and suffering from breast cancer, is known for her defense of Black Panthers, radical leftists and others reviled by the capitalist state.

**Jaan Laaman** and **Thomas Manning** are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. Their children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds.

The Ohio 7's politics were once shared by thousands of radicals during the Vietnam antiwar movement and by New Leftists who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary of Third World liberation movements. But, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. They should not have served a day in prison.

**Ed Poindexter** and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They were victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and they have now served more than 40 years in jail. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter and Mondo new trials despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a 911 audio tape long suppressed by the FBI, proved that testimony of the state's key witness was perjured.

**Hugo Pinell**, the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison, has been in solitary isolation for more than four decades. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, his comrade and mentor, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Despite numerous letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years, Pinell was again denied parole in 2009. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious torture chamber, Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit in California, a focal point for two recent hunger strikes against grotesquely inhuman conditions.

***Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holidoy Appeols will go to the Closs-Wor Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not chority but an elementory oct of solidarity with those imprisoned for their opposition to rocist copitolism and imperiolist depredations. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252.*** ■

and imprisoned. The vindictive Zionist rulers want him forever silenced, but the working class internationally will be forever in Vanunu's debt.

### Mounting Pressure Against China

Increasing belligerence toward Iran comes as the U.S. is preparing to withdraw almost all of its troops from Iraq and draw down its forces in Afghanistan, while strengthening its position elsewhere in the region. The U.S. is reportedly planning to beef up its military contingent in Kuwait, while reinforcing its naval presence in the Persian Gulf. The Obama administration is also looking to negotiate a stronger military alliance with the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, dominated by Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the U.S. and Turkey have announced the placement of an American anti-missile radar system on Turkish territory, 435 miles from Iran, by the end of the year.

Chief among U.S. rulers' concerns in redirecting their forces is pursuing the military encirclement of China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states. In the name of fighting "terrorism," the U.S. has in the past decade enhanced its military presence in the Philippines and resumed open military relations with Indonesia, in addition to establishing bases in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Washington has also strengthened military ties with the Japanese imperialists and continues to buttress capitalist Taiwan. Last week, Commander-in-Chief Obama announced plans to deploy 2,500 marines to Darwin in northern Australia as a move to counter China.

Capitalism was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution. Today, despite major inroads by both foreign and indigenous capitalists, the core elements of China's economy remain collectivized. Ultimately, the U.S. imperialists aim to restore capitalist rule in China, and for this they have a multipronged strategy: capitalist economic penetration combined with military pressure and support to domestic counterrevolutionaries, such as the "Free Tibet" movement. It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Thus, we support the testing and development of nukes and delivery systems by North Korea and China.

Meyer/Dallas Morning News

**U.S. soldiers terrorize unarmed man during imperialist occupation of Iraq, 2003.**

China is highly dependent on the flow of Iranian oil—in 2009, Iran ranked as China's second largest oil provider. Despite this fact, the Stalinist regime in Beijing supported all four previous rounds of UN sanctions directed against Iran, a measure of the Stalinist bureaucracy's futile strivings for "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists. In the interest of its economic relationship with the U.S., the Beijing bureaucracy has also embraced the imperialists' "war on terror." Through its appeasement of imperialism and opposition to the program of world socialist revolution, the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy undermines the defense of the workers state. It is necessary for the Chinese proletariat to carry out a political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

### Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home

The working people of Iran have a long history of subjugation by the imperialists and bloody suppression by their "own" rulers. In 1953, after the modernizing nationalist regime of Mohammad Mossadeq tried to nationalize Iran's oil fields, the CIA staged a coup, installing Shah Pahlevi and propping up his savage rule for 25 years. In 1979, in a "revolution" hailed by almost the entire left internationally, the Islamic hierarchy under Ayatollah Khomeini seized power, going on to crush struggles by workers, women and oppressed national minorities. Women were segregated from society under *sharia* law and forced to don the sweltering head-to-toe veil; workers organizations were smashed; leftists were jailed and executed. Uniquely, our organization, then known as the international Spartacist tendency, championed the proletariat's class interests against the forces of Islamic reaction. Our battle cry was: "Down With the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!"

Today, Iran is again a cauldron of discontent, with the working people, youth and women suffering privation and chafing under the mullahs' rule. The multinational Iranian working class, leading all the oppressed behind it, must overthrow the Persian-chauvinist, clericalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party in Iran. Such parties must be built throughout the Near East in struggle against all forms of fundamentalism and nationalism. In Egypt, where there has been a new outburst of mass opposition to military rule, the working class must emerge as a contender for power in its own right, against both the army and the powerful, reactionary forces of political Islam. In Israel, where recent popular struggles against economic privation have helped reveal the class divisions that define that society, Zionism continues to chain the overwhelmingly Jewish proletariat to its class enemy (see "U.S./Israel Tighten Screws on Palestinians," *WV* No. 988, 14 October).

The International Communist League fights for a socialist federation of the Near East, necessarily linked to the struggle to sweep away the rapacious imperialist rulers in the U.S. and elsewhere through workers revolutions. Imperialist subjugation, military occupations and war are endemic to capitalism in its death agony, and can only be fought through a struggle against the entire system of exploitation and oppression. The Spartacist League/U.S. is committed to building a multiracial workers party that breaks the political chains tying the working class to its "own" exploiters, particularly the labor bureaucracy's support to the Democrats. Such a party is the necessary instrument to lead the struggle for workers power to victory in the heartland of world imperialism. ■

# Occupy...

*(continued from page 12)*

unorganized, workers were recently fired by the Australian-owned Toll Group transportation company for trying to organize with the Teamsters. Three days later, a November 18 Occupy Oakland General Assembly voted to expand the L.A. proposal. It called on "each West Coast occupation to organize a mass mobilization to shut down its local port" on December 12, emphasizing solidarity with the ongoing fight by longshoremen in Longview, Washington, against the union-busting attacks of the giant EGT grain conglomerate (see "ILWU Fights Deadly Threat," *WV* No. 986, 16 September).

That these activists want to solidarize with labor is welcome. At the same time, thanks in large part to the betrayals of the trade-union bureaucrats, few if any in the Occupy movement have much sense of working-class struggle. Instead, protesters have been led to believe that solidarity with workers means activists setting up community pickets to shut down port operations. However well-intentioned, such actions do little to advance the workers' consciousness of their power as a class not only to defend their own interests but to champion the cause of all the oppressed against the capitalist ruling class and its state. As was the case when thousands of demonstrators shut down the Port of Oakland the night of November 2, the workers are relegated to the sidelines. Seeing the opportunity to allow the ranks to blow off some steam, the labor tops are happy to subsume the workers under the populist politics of the Occupy movement, politics that the bureaucrats themselves amply share.

An article in *Socialist Worker* (10 November), newspaper of the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), argues that: "Many labor leaders have correctly seen Occupy as a key to a revival of the union movement." On the contrary, the labor tops embrace the Occupy movement not to revive workers struggle but to divert workers' discontent once again into advancing the electoral fortunes of the Democratic Party. This was put baldly in a video statement by SEIU president Mary Kay Henry: "We agree, all across SEIU, that we need to stand for a 99 percent agenda and re-elect our president, Barack Obama, and that those two steps are on the same path,..so that we can make the 2012 election about the agenda for the 99 percent." For the unions to become instruments of militant struggle against the exploiters requires a leadership that will advance to the battle from the perspective of class war, not acceptance of capitalist exploitation and reliance on bourgeois politicians.

### Democratic Party, Enemy of Workers and the Oppressed

The populism of the "99 percent" slogan boils down to the defense and extension of American capitalist "democracy." A posting on the official Occupy Wall Street Web site following the police raid on Zuccotti Park proclaimed, "Facing the most brutal assault on our Democracy since 9-11, New Yorkers must once again stand as one!" This statement echoes the outlook of the American ruling class, which seized upon the September 11 attacks to push "national unity" jingoism. In calling on the population to "stand as one," the goal of the capitalist rulers was to line up support for their imperialist wars of depredation abroad, while they launched anti-immigrant witchhunts and shredded civil liberties at home. This is the true face of American "democracy." With the protests awash in such patriotism, it is no surprise that the ongoing imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan seem to be off the radar of the Occupy movement.

Always glomming on to anything calling itself a movement, the fake socialists have fully embraced the Occupy protests. Workers World Party honcho Larry Holmes absurdly hailed Occupy as a "fledgling revolution" (workers.org, 12 October), while the ISO has enthused

AP

**California, November 18: Cop pepper-sprays UC Davis protesters directly in the face.**

over it for supposedly "transforming the political landscape in the United States" (socialistworker.org, 8 November). For the reformist left, Occupy is the latest vehicle for peddling their "fight the right" opportunism, which amounts to nothing other than promoting illusions in the other party of capitalist rule, the Democrats.

The U.S. ruling class has two primary ways of dealing with protest—state repression and political co-optation. Describing how the Occupy movement receives funding and support from key Democratic Party foundations and outfits, including MoveOn.org, Patrick Henningsen commented in an article in the London *Guardian* (15 November): "When the dust settles and it's all said and done, millions of Occupy participants may very well be given a sober lesson under the heading of 'controlled opposition.' In the end, the Occupy movement could easily end up doing the bidding of the very elite globalist powers that they were demonstrating against to begin with."

Militant youth and workers seeking a solution to capitalism's ills must draw the lessons of past struggles to avoid being caught in a revolving door of Democratic Party pressure politics. Mobilizing the power of the working class, independently from the parties of capital, is crucial to every struggle against imperialism, exploitation and the myriad forms of oppression under capitalism. A revolutionary workers party is the necessary instrument to weld together these struggles into the fight for proletarian power. Our task, as a small internationalist Marxist organization, is to fight for the understanding that the road to human freedom lies through socialist revolution. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

## Democrats Unleash Cop Crackdown

# Drop the Charges Against All Occupy Protesters!

NOVEMBER 21—Over the last two weeks, a wave of brutal police attacks has descended on Occupy protesters and encampments across the nation, including surprise nighttime raids, unrelenting pepper spray and baton beatings and hundreds of arrests. Two days after riot police dismantled the Zuccotti Park encampment, during a November 17 "Day of Action" the NYPD left protesters bloodied and beaten and detained over 200, among them leaders of the large Service Employees International Union (SEIU), a city councilman and at least 26 journalists. Billionaire New York mayor Bloomberg unleashed the cops en masse and then praised them for their "restraint." ***We demand all the charges against Occupy protesters be dropped immediately!***

Crackdowns on encampments in Oakland, Portland, Denver and other cities—launched under the pretext of supposed health and safety hazards—were carried out overwhelmingly by Democratic mayors in a coordinated effort to shut down these popular protests. So-called "progressive" Democrat Jean Quan, mayor of Oakland, admitted to participating in a conference call with officials from other cities nationwide to discuss how to disperse the encampments. Providing a grotesque justification for the Oakland sweep, Quan singled out "anarchist groups who have been looking for a confrontation with the police."

Amid skyrocketing tuition costs and school budget cuts, Occupy protests have also spread to the universities and come up against the administration and its campus cop thugs. When students at UC Berkeley were attempting to set up an encampment on November 9, police moved in with nightsticks, brutally clubbing protesters who were chanting "Stop beating students!" Graphic video taken on November 18, after cops dismantled the encampment at UC Davis, shows students seated with linked arms being pepper-sprayed directly in the face by police, resulting in several hospitalizations. In an open letter that same day to the chancellor, one faculty member noted: "When students covered their eyes with their clothing, police forced open their mouths and pepper-sprayed down their throats."

The FBI and Homeland Security are reported to have assisted the local cops, with the Feds spotted staking out Occupy sites. Last week, federal immigration agents took custody of one protester who had been arrested by local police (while meditating!) during the November 14 raid on Occupy Oakland. A native of Mexico, Francisco Ramos Stierle faces the threat of being deported, as hundreds of thousands already have been, under Obama's "Secure Communities" program. ***No deportation of Francisco Ramos Stierle!***

Stolarik/NY Times

Atkins/SF Chronicle

**Above: Police assault Occupy Wall Street protesters, New York, November 17. Below: Occupy Cal mass protest at UC Berkeley, November 15.**

Demonstrators across the country have been hit with charges ranging from disorderly conduct and resisting arrest to inciting a riot and assaulting police officers. Such charges are meant to intimidate anyone who would oppose the violence, poverty and exploitation that are endemic to the rule of capital. Despite the brutality against Occupy protesters, many still hold to the illusion that the cops are allies. In fact, it is the job description of the police to protect the profit system through organized violence.

These recurrent, naked displays of capitalist state repression against liberal but defiant protesters, students and veterans have generated widespread anger with the "powers that be." Suffering the unmitigated effects of the economic crisis—i.e., the closure of schools, high unemployment and the slashing of social programs—many are expressing solidarity with a movement that at least appears to be doing *something* to protest such ravages. However, the Occupy protests do not in any way fundamentally challenge the workings of the capitalist order, which is the root cause of misery and inequality. Notwithstanding the movement's insistence on having no demands at all, the program embodied in the protests is simple liberal reform.

### The Centrality of the Working Class

As Marxists, we struggle to impart the understanding that the barbaric capitalist profit system cannot be reformed to benefit working people and the oppressed, but must be overthrown. The only way to assure jobs and decent living standards, including free quality medical care and education for all, is by seizing the wealth from the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and putting it in the hands of those whose labor makes society run, i.e., the working class.

The ubiquitous slogan of the Occupy movement—"We are the 99 percent"—is based on a populist notion of the "people," which ludicrously lumps together everyone besides a small, rich elite, the so-called "one percent." According to this outlook, workers and the oppressed supposedly share common interests with the managers who fire their employees, cops who gun down black people and religious leaders who preach obedience to authority.

The real, fundamental class division in capitalist society is that between the working class, which sells its labor power to survive, and the capitalist class, which owns the banks and means of production, such as the factories and mines. The bourgeoisie, the group of fat cats that actually is a very small fraction of the "one percent," makes the real decisions and reaps the profits by exploiting labor. The interests of these two main classes are entirely irreconcilable.

Uniquely, the international working class possesses the social power—derived from its ability to shut off the flow of profit by withholding its labor—and collective interest to expropriate the bourgeoisie and reorganize society globally on a socialist basis. The heterogeneous intermediate social layers in the petty bourgeoisie—encompassing students, professionals and shopkeepers among others—has no direct relationship to the means of production. Lacking social power, the petty bourgeoisie cannot provide an alternative to capitalism and, depending on which way the wind is blowing, will align either with the workers or against them. If the working-class leadership shows that it has the resolve and program to lead society out of its crisis, it can pull much of the petty bourgeoisie behind the workers in struggle.

There is a sense of solidarity with the working class among Occupy activists, but mainly the workers are seen as simply another victimized sector of the "99 percent." On November 15, Occupy Los Angeles approved a proposal for a "port action" on December 12 that would include the occupation of "at least one facility owned by SSA Marine, a shipping company belonging to Goldman Sachs." The motion said that this action "could be coordinated with a possible port shutdown by port truck drivers." Twenty-six of these largely immigrant, and

*continued on page 11*

## For Socialist Revolution!

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 992 9 December 2011

AFP

AP

Left: Health workers march in Athens against austerity cuts during two-day general strike, October 19. Above: German chancellor Angela Merkel and French president Nicolas Sarkozy at recent G20 meeting in Cannes.

# Economic Crisis Rips Europe

## Down With the EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

*This article was written by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany.*

The economic crisis intensifying in Europe—a particularly severe expression of the world capitalist crisis—was triggered in the spring of 2010 as global financial capitalists, fearing that heavily indebted Greece would default on its loan obligations, began spurning Greek government bonds. These fears have extended not only to Portugal and Ireland but also to the much larger economies of Spain and Italy, which are both having trouble refinancing their state debts. Now France, which along with Germany is central to the European Union (EU), has been threatened with a downgrading of its government debt. Frenzied efforts by the EU to devise new "rescue packages," as well as futile appeals to Brazil and China to step in and help with a bailout, have all proved insufficient. A headline of the financial news service Eurointelligence (22 November) describes "a slow motion train wreck" of the euro, the euro zone (consisting of the 17 countries in the EU that use the euro as a common currency) and probably the EU itself.

Fears over a spreading "credit crunch" in Europe have unsettled international financial markets, threatening to drive the world economy into another major downturn. U.S. banks have been reducing their holdings in European government bonds, while American money market funds have been closing the spigot of money they lend to European banks. This has forced banks in Europe to tighten lending standards, hoard capital to shore up their balance sheets and withdraw financing from long-time customers. Governments are promising ever more severe budget cuts in the hope of pacifying bond markets. The net effect has been a "credit crunch and a squeeze on aggregate demand that is forcing Europe into recession" (*Economist*, 26 November). Industrial orders in the euro zone fell by 6.8 percent in September, the steepest decline since December 2008.

While initially bourgeois politicians in Germany refused to admit the possibility of a Greek default, fearing that this would destabilize the euro, German chancellor Angela Merkel is now openly threatening to expel Greece from the euro zone. On December 5, Germany and France issued their first joint call for amendments to the EU's treaty to introduce more centralized oversight of the euro zone and additional penalties for countries that violate the rules of "budget discipline."

Over the past several weeks, governments deemed insufficiently zealous in enforcing capitalist austerity have found themselves unceremoniously tossed out of power. In Greece, Prime Minister George Papandreou of the bourgeois Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), whose credibility was waning with a populace infuriated by the cutbacks, was removed in a political coup organized by EU leaders and domestic opponents, including members of his own party, after he suggested that there should be a referendum on economic policies. The new government, which now incorporates the main opposition party, New Democracy, as well as PASOK and a small, fascist-infested organization (LAOS), has pledged to continue the austerity program. Similar methods were used to get rid of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy. In Spain, fury over the austerity policies of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government led to the election of Mariano Rajoy's right-wing Popular Party.

The concern of all wings of the bourgeoisie in the major EU countries is not at all to rescue countries like Greece but to bail out their own banks. The bottom line is that the workers and poor must pay for the capitalist crisis. Underlining that Germany is the pre-eminent power in the EU and calls the shots, Merkel has dictated hardline austerity budgets for debtor countries seeking financial assistance. Governments have engaged in an orgy of spending cuts, with layoffs of public employees, pay cuts, reductions in welfare expenditures, privatizations, etc. In Greece, wages have decreased by 15.4 percent, while the official unemployment rate now exceeds 18 percent. In Spain it is close to 23 percent.

We Trotskyist internationalists are opposed on principle to the EU and any other imperialist alliance. Recognizing that the euro would be an instrument of the EU imperialists, we opposed its introduction. We also opposed the Eastern extension of the EU because it was clear that it meant increased exploitation of the workers of East Europe. At the same time, we have fought against the chauvinist discrimination against East European workers in West Europe.

As Marxists, we understand that an imperialist alliance or bloc can hold together for some time, but since capitalism is based on the nation-state, these

*continued on page 3*

Reuters

**November 30: Demonstration in London, part of one-day strike across Britain by up to two million state workers protesting budget and service cuts.**

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## 2011 Subscription Drive Success

# *WV* Welcomes New Readers

To widen the readership of our press, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs embark on a national campaign each year from August to October. This year, we surpassed our quota by 26 percent with 2,512 points, which includes 1,186 new subscriptions and renewals to *Workers Vanguard*, 60 to *Espartaco* (published by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México) and 102 to the press of other International Communist League sections. Congratulations to comrade Dylan of the Bay Area local, who won the subscription drive with 125 points.

The backdrop to the sub drive again was the prolonged economic crisis, which has thrown millions of working people out of their homes and jobs. As the chief executive of capitalist class rule, Barack Obama has overseen this ruin at home as well as the atrocities committed by U.S. imperialism abroad. Although enthusiasm for Obama has faded over time as he continues to stick the knife into workers, immigrants and black people, one comrade noted, "When pressed, most subscribers said they would probably vote for Obama again as a lesser evil compared to the insane types running on the Republican ticket."

Support for the capitalist Democratic Party "lesser evil" peddled by the trade-union bureaucracy is a key prop for the maintenance of racist American capitalism and has served as a central political obstacle to mobilizing workers in defense of themselves and the oppressed. We hope our newspaper will help to win workers and students to a Marxist worldview and an understanding of the need to build revolutionary workers parties internationally to fight for the overthrow of world capitalism through socialist revolution.

Our campaign kicked off at the outset of the Verizon strike, the largest strike in the U.S. in the last few years. We sold dozens of introductory *WV* subscriptions to workers on the picket lines but were not able to extend these intros into full-year subscriptions. One factor that we encountered was the frustration that set in after the union bureaucracy called off the two-week strike without a settlement.

WV Photo

**Spartacists at Occupy Wall Street protest, October 5.**

On the other hand, we sold large numbers of subscriptions to longshore workers on the West Coast and nationally, including in Longview, Washington, during our two trips to intersect and report on the struggle of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 21. In early September, Local 21 and its supporters fought back against the union-busting EGT grain-exporting conglomerate by engaging in the kind of militant labor action that built the industrial unions in the U.S. in the 1930s. In response, the bosses and their state hit the union with brutal cop attacks, harassment and arrests as well as court-issued fines (see "ILWU Fights Deadly Threat," *WV* No. 986, 16 September and "Defend Longview ILWU Against Bosses' Cops and Courts!" *WV* No. 987, 30 September). Concrete acts of labor solidarity, especially internationally, are urgently needed to back up the union in its ongoing battle with EGT.

In addition to our material on the Longview struggle, longshoremen expressed interest in what we had to say about the economic downturn and, especially on the East Coast, there was outrage over the execution of Troy Davis. One comrade who sold to longshoremen in Oregon noted, "Workers expressed a lot of basic class anger: the rich get richer while working people are squeezed dry." The most popular giveaway in the sub drive was our 2009 pamphlet on the economy, *Karl Marx Was Right: Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*.

We attracted attention among students

*continued on page 5*

**TROTSKY**

### For a Workers Europe!

**LENIN**

*The crisis racking the EU shows that a united Europe under capitalism is a chimera. In a February 1926 speech, one of his last addresses to Soviet workers before his expulsion from the Communist Party by Stalin in November 1927, Leon Trotsky stressed that only the proletarian overthrow of capitalist rule could achieve the genuine unification and economic integration of Europe. Trotsky projected that a Europe under workers rule, allied with the Soviet Union and a liberated Asia, would be a bulwark against capitalist America, which had become the world's dominant imperialist force, while also serving as a springboard for workers rule in the U.S.*

The proletarian revolution signifies the unification of Europe. Bourgeois economists, pacifists, business sharpers, day-dreamers and mere bourgeois babblers are not averse nowadays to talk about a United States of Europe. But that task is beyond the strength of the European bourgeoisie which is utterly corroded by contradictions. Europe can be unified only by the victorious European proletariat. No matter where the revolution may first break out, and no matter what the tempo of its development may be, the economic unification of Europe is the first indispensable condition for its socialist reconstruction. Back in 1923 the Communist International proclaimed that it is necessary to drive out those who have partitioned Europe, take power in partitioned Europe in order to unify it, in order to create the Socialist United States of Europe.

Revolutionary Europe will clear a road for herself to raw materials, to food products; she will know how to get help from the peasantry. We ourselves have grown sufficiently strong to be able to extend some help to revolutionary Europe during the most difficult months. Over and above this, we will provide for Europe an excellent bridge to Asia. Proletarian England, shoulder to shoulder with the peoples of India, will insure the independence of that country. But this does not mean that England will lose the possibility of a close economic collaboration with India. Free India will have need of European technology and culture; Europe will have need of the products of India. The Soviet United States of Europe, together with our Soviet Union, will serve as the mightiest of magnets for the peoples of Asia, who will gravitate toward the establishment of the closest economic and political ties with proletarian Europe.

—Leon Trotsky, "Europe and America" (*Fourth International*, May 1943)


**WORKERS VANGUARD**

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.**

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*Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.*

The closing date for news in this issue is December 6.

**No. 992** **9 December 2011**


## Letter

### A Thank You Note

[Received 27 October 2011]

The Sept. 30 edition of the Vanguard was the best I have ever read—and I wanted to send a quick note of solidarity.

The article on Troy Davis was an excellent piece, and the transcripts on the Commune wonderful grounding—the now *and* the then.

I encourage you to publish more material from classes and talks.

Thank you for your work and dedication.

Heath

### Letters Policy

*Workers Vanguard* welcomes letters from our readers. Opinions expressed in letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the *WV* Editorial Board. We reserve the right to respond to letters either at the time of publication or at a later point. We verify the authenticity of letters published in *Workers Vanguard*; only letters received with contact information will be considered for publication. Letters can be published anonymously if the author so desires. In order to facilitate the printing of letters, which we do not edit, please keep them to 500 words or less. Letters can be sent to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 or e-mailed to vanguard@tiac.net.


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## Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
## Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

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For info.: (312) 563-0442

**NEW YORK CITY**

Friday, January 6
6 to 9 p.m.
CWA Local 1180 Hall
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Steelworkers Hall
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Illustration by Deni

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# Europe...

*(continued from page 1)*

alliances must break up under their own internal contradictions. Our opposition comes from the basic standpoint of opposing capitalism and imperialism. We fight for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through socialist revolution and for an internationally planned economy that will overcome the limits of the nation-state. Our call is for a *Socialist United States of Europe!*

To date, the Greek working class has carried out 14 one- or two-day general strikes, trying to fight back against the joint offensive of the European imperialists and its own bourgeoisie. While these strikes have made it more difficult for the government to enforce austerity measures, the attacks on jobs and living standards are unrelenting. In the Italian capital of Rome on Octoher 15, hundreds of thousands of workers and youth demonstrated against the much-discredited Berlusconi government and the measures it was trying to introduce, such as privatizations and raising the pension age. After Berlusconi fell, the leaders of the liberal opposition supported the new government in the name of national unity in order to enforce the very same measures against which the masses had demonstrated a month earlier. In Portugal, a one-day general strike on November 24 stopped nearly everything in the country. But the "Communist" opposition undermines workers struggle with its appeal to the national interest, complaining about "relinquishing the sovereignty of the country" (*Junge Welt*, 25 November).

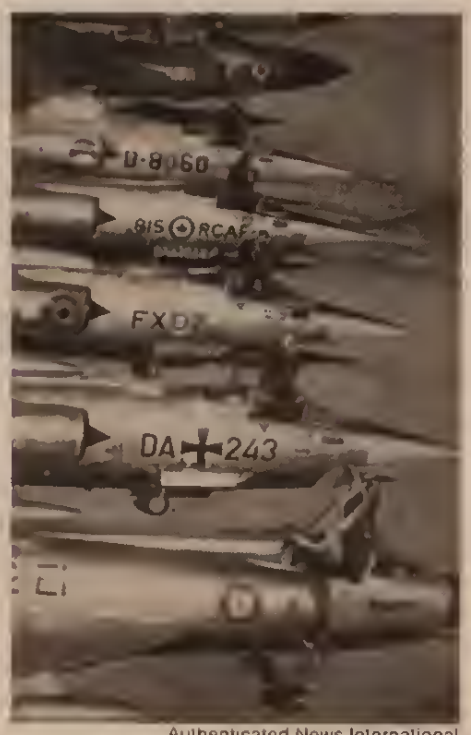
The reformist labor leaders cannot lead effective class struggle against capitalist austerity because they politically support the EU and more broadly are wedded to the bourgeois order. The leaders of the main body of Spanish trade unions are allied to the PSOE, while in Greece the main union federations are run by PASOK supporters—i.e., the very parties that until very recently were spearheading the austerity drive in those countries. The reformists accept the class-collaborationist lie that the workers and their exploiters have a common "national interest" and therefore the workers must make their "fair share" of sacrifices when the economy goes bust. But workers and capitalists have *counterposed class interests*. The boom-bust cycle is endemic to the capitalist system and will be eliminated only when the proletariat takes power and seizes the productive property of the bourgeoisie.

Class struggle in Germany as well as France in solidarity with Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers would not only broaden their struggles against austerity but also would help workers throughout Europe to free themselves from nationalism and break from their own bourgeoisies. In Germany, the class-collaborationist policies of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) have played a significant role in enabling the German bourgeoisie to increase its competitiveness against its rivals. The coalition of the SPD and the bourgeois Greens, in power from 1998 to 2005, was instrumental in increasing German competitiveness by slashing wages and working conditions and carrying out attacks on the "welfare state," centrally through a series of measures known as the "Hartz" reforms that greatly reduced unemployment and social welfare benefits. The use of temporary labor increased dramatically and a huge low-wage sector was created. With the median figure for real wages declining 7.4 percent between 2000 and 2010, now 1.4 million people with full-time jobs need additional welfare in order to survive.

Spartakist

**ICL has consistently opposed EU imperialist trade bloc. German Trotskyists raise call "For a Socialist United States of Europe!" at 1982 demonstration in Bonn.**

While Germany already had the largest economy in Europe, its increased competitiveness explains why it can run the show on the continent. It is clear that German capitalism's increased profitability comes directly out of the pockets of the German working class. This points to the connection between the struggle against imperialism abroad and the fight against capitalist rule at home. Above all, what is necessary is forging revolutionary internationalist parties in Germany and elsewhere that can lead the working masses in their struggles for life's necessities as part of the fight for workers rule.



Authenticated News International

**NATO jets, part of imperialists' Cold War arsenal aimed at Soviet Union.**

## EU: From Anti-Soviet Alliance to Imperialist Consortium

Dominated by Germany and France, the EU exists centrally to advance the interests of these imperialist powers and their junior partners in exploiting their own working class and to use the more dependent states, such as Greece and many East European countries, as their summer holiday resorts or low-wage manufacturing backyards. We have been consistent in our political opposition to the EU and its predecessors. Thus, we wrote in "Labor and the Common Market" (*WV* No. 15, January 1973): "In the imperialist era, alliances between capitalist states, including their economic aspects, are directed against other states, advanced as well as backward states. The Common Market is essentially an unstable alliance between French and German capitalism on the basis of the most reactionary economic policies."

The EU is a fragile formation exposed to continuous tensions stemming from the disparate national interests of the European imperialists, which are constantly threatening to tear it apart. Nor can it be otherwise. Although the productive forces have long since outgrown a national framework, capitalism is a system that rests essentially on nation-states: each of the various national capitalist classes needs its own state to push through and defend its interests at home and abroad. Hence under capitalism, the goal of political union or a European superstate is necessarily reactionary and an empty utopia.

As V.I. Lenin, the leader of the proletarian October Revolution in Russia in 1917, wrote:

> "Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America."
>
> —"On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" (August 1915)

Lenin emphasized that the division of profits among imperialist rivals is ultimately determined by *force*. This understanding was counterposed to the claims of German social democrat Karl Kautsky, whose fantasy of "ultra-imperialism" posited the peaceful resolution of such conflicts, obviating the need for proletarian revolution. Lenin stressed: "Under capitalism there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics."

The origins of the European Union go back to the 1950s, when the West European imperialists under U.S. leadership attempted to stabilize their alliance against the Soviet Union through closer economic cooperation. Issuing out of the October Revolution, Soviet Russia remained a workers state—based on the expropriation of the capitalists and the collectivization of the means of production—despite its degeneration under J.V. Stalin. With a planned economy, the USSR provided jobs, housing, medical care and education for all, in sharp distinction to the ravages of capitalism that are all too obvious today. We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet Union militarily against the imperialists, who always desired to destroy it.

Our opposition on principle to both NATO—the post-World War II military alliance against the Soviet Union—and the EU and its predecessors was linked to our defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of the DDR (East Germany) and East Europe. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the EU/NATO's anti-Soviet function disappeared. The EU remained an imperialist trade bloc. The U.S. retains military hegemony, although not the same economic clout it once had.

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, French president François Mitterrand made France's acquiescence to German reunification, achieved when capitalist West Germany swallowed up the DDR, dependent on the two countries' agreement on a common currency. This was supposed to restrain a newly strengthened Germany from running roughshod over other European states, principally France. Additionally, the currency would be a weapon against the international hegemony of the U.S. dollar. But the unity between these two imperialist powers is itself fraught with conflict, as the disputes over how to deal with the current crisis in the euro zone demonstrate.

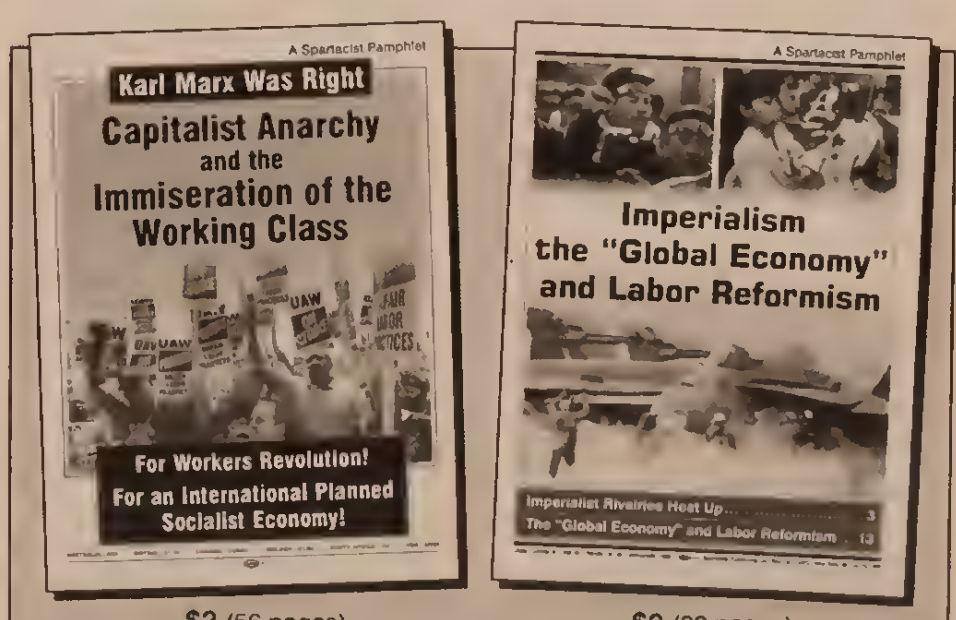
The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 authorized the introduction of the euro, which was first traded in 1999 before being introduced as actual money for consumers in 2002. The French Communist Party (PCF) originally opposed the treaty, fearing that it would lead to the dominance of German imperialism over French imperialism, i.e., they opposed it from the reactionary perspective of French nationalism. Later, the PCF made its peace with the euro. So has pretty much the entire European reformist left, which either explicitly supports the EU or claims that it is a framework that can be utilized to better the situation of working people (a "social Europe").

The forerunner of the League for the Fifth International and its British group Workers Power took an abstentionist position on the 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. They were enthusiastic over the EU "social charter," with its empty promises of guaranteeing workers rights, sexual equality and such, as was the British Lahour Party. *Workers Power* (June 1992) argued that "the terms of the Maastricht Treaty can also be a basis for extending rights and gains from states where the working class never won those gains, or where it has lost them," and they continued that "to some extent European workers will be better armed to fight back on a continental scale after the implementation of the terms of Maastricht." The French group Lutte Ouvrière (LO) similarly wrote in 2005, "Even as is, on a capitalist basis, with all the accompanying injustices and insufficiencies, the European Union represents progress in a certain number of areas." Workers Power and LO are latter-day Kautskyites, flunkeys for capital, with

*continued on page 4*

## CORRECTION

In "Fake Trotskyists in Camp of Counterrevolution—Hue and Cry over China's Role in Africa" (*WV* No. 987, 30 September), we wrongly cited 1954 as the date of the Asian-African Solidarity Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, where Chinese premier Zhou Enlai propounded the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence." The conference actually convened in April 1955.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# Europe...

*(continued from page 3)*

touching faith in "democratic" imperialism and its various alliances.

Opposition to the EU and the euro does come from some bourgeois quarters, however. A section of the German bourgeoisie has always been very skeptical about the euro, thinking that German imperialism could function better with the deutschmark. There are strong anti-EU sentiments among the British Tories, while various fascist and right-wing populist groups oppose the EU from the standpoint of national chauvinism. In effect, the reformist left has conceded opposition to the EU—correctly seen by many workers as an instrument of capitalist austerity—to the reactionary right wing.

## German Imperialism's Third Try to Rule Europe

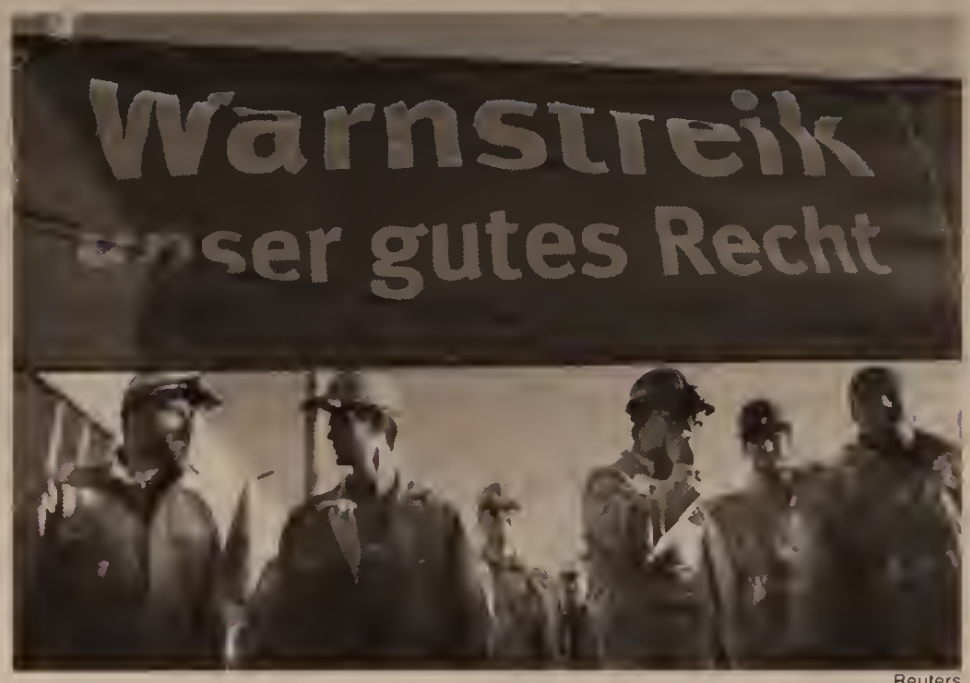
In a 1997 statement, the International Communist League stressed that a common currency without a common state is not viable:

> "Control over the quantity of money within its boundaries is a basic economic prerogative of a bourgeois state, one necessarily closely linked to other instruments of economic policy. A stable monetary system based on the 'euro' would require tight and permanent restrictions over taxation and government expenditure in all the EU member states.... But since capitalism is organised on the basis of particular national states, itself the cause of repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world, it is impossible to cohere a stable pan-European bourgeois state. A European imperialist 'superstate' can be achieved only by the methods of Adolf Hitler.... Should the Maastricht project for a common European currency come into being, it would amount to only a brief, conflict-ridden episode."
>
> —"For a Workers Europe—For Socialist Revolution!" *WV* No. 670, 13 June 1997

We now have the first really serious world economic crisis since that statement was written, and the conflicts that have arisen in Europe threaten to bring the EU rapidly to the point of implosion. Behind this open fragmentation is the built-in instability in the monetary system of the EU and the fact that it is formed of competing national states with different levels of labor productivity. These differences, exacerbated by the crisis, have been reflected through the differentials in public borrowing and interest rates on state bonds.

German imperialism made huge profits through driving down wages at home and through the introduction of the euro, and they would like to keep things that way. For years, Germany has run a trade surplus, which was financed through massive private and public debt in other euro zone states and spurred by the fact that the common currency helps keep German industrial exports cheap throughout the euro zone. The German bourgeoisie is not about to reduce the surplus, arguing that this is the problem of the countries with a trade deficit.

Ordinarily, each country has its own currency, and a debtor country can get some relief and regain competitiveness by devaluing its currency. But this is not possible in a currency union. The German bourgeoisie demands that debtor countries slash wages, pensions and welfare. Another proposal is for German capital to lend more funds to the poorer countries in the euro zone—but this is vehemently opposed by the German bourgeoisie. In a *Financial Times* online (13 September) column on the breakdown in the euro zone, Martin Wolf wrote: "This is what I heard from an Italian policymaker: 'We gave up the old safety valves of inflation and devaluation in return for lower interest rates, but now we do not even have the low interest rates.'... And, not least: 'It would be better to leave than endure 30 years of pain.' These remarks speak of a loss of faith in both the project and the partners."




Reuters

**German steel workers in Krefeld during warning strike to demand higher wages, November 9.**

There is no way out for debtor countries like Greece under the setup dictated by the German bourgeoisie. The sharp cuts in public spending have had a predictable deflationary effect—the Greek economy has contracted by 7.5 percent over the past year. A smaller economy means less tax revenue, thereby increasing the deficit and prompting demands for more austerity. At the same time, many bourgeois pundits across the board have issued hysterical warnings on how bad things will be if Greece leaves the euro zone. But that depends on the conditions imposed. After Argentina pegged its currency to the U.S. dollar, its economy went into a deep recession and the country went bankrupt in 2001. Investors in Argentinean bonds lost 70 percent of their money, outraging international banking interests. Following the bankruptcy, Argentina stopped pegging its currency to the dollar and the economy recovered, albeit not until average wages had dropped 30 percent.

The example of Argentina shows graphically that Greece might be much better off if it defaulted and left the euro zone, reinstating its own currency. However, while this might provide relief from the downward spiral, leaving the euro zone will not insulate the Greek proletariat from the world economic downturn and capitalist devastation. In Britain (which is in the EU but not in the euro zone), the Tory government of David Cameron is just as intent on slashing spending as his counterparts on the continent. On November 30, British public sector workers staged a massive one-day strike against austerity measures, including threatened layoffs and an extension of the wage freeze. Socialist revolution is the only solution to unemployment, wage cuts, imperialist war and the other depredations of decaying capitalism.

## German-French Axis Rattles Along Until It Breaks

Concerned about the stability of the euro zone (and the French economy), President Nicolas Sarkozy earlier supported the introduction of euro bonds—a scheme whereby the euro zone states would issue common bonds—or alternatively that the European Central Bank buy government bonds directly to bail out countries in trouble. But Merkel has not gone along, knowing that ultimately the money in these schemes will come from Germany. The Obama administration has also pleaded with Merkel to ante up more money. The bottom line is that nothing happens unless it is acceptable to Berlin. As a creditor nation, the Germans stress the need for a balanced budget and a strong euro (the deutschmark in drag), with inflation considered the worst thing in the world. This is justified by reference to two periods of German inflation in 1923 and after WWII, ignoring the equally disastrous deflationary policy during the depression of the early 1930s.

When EU Commission president José Manuel Barroso proposed introducing euro bonds under the name "stability bonds," the German right-wing tabloid *Bild* (23 November) ran the headline: "Britain, America, and the Whole EU. They All Want Our Money." Meanwhile in France, Jacques Attali, a former adviser to Mitterrand, charged that Germany twice led Europe into suicidal wars in the past century and said: "Today, it is again Germany's turn to hold in its hand the weapon for the continent's collective suicide." The PCF chimed in by denouncing Sarkozy for giving in to Merkel over the crisis and accusing him of a "financial Munich," a reference to the 1938 decision by France and Britain to refrain from going to war against Hitler's Germany over its occupation of the Sudetenland.

AFP

**August 1: African asylum-seekers clash with cops near immigration center in Bari, Italy.**

At the EU summit at the end of October, the heads of state of the ten non-euro zone countries were excluded from a discussion on the euro crisis. This elicited a complaint from British prime minister Cameron, who noted that the crisis in the euro zone impacted elsewhere, including London, a world financial center. Sarkozy snorted at Cameron, who not too long ago was his brother-in-arms in the bombing of Libya: "You have lost a good opportunity to shut up. We are sick of you criticizing us and telling us what to do. You say you hate the euro and now you want to interfere in our meetings."

The EU is falling apart under the tensions of conflicting national interests. These tensions can also be seen in the imposition of restrictions on the right of passage within the EU, supposedly guaranteed by the Schengen agreement. In 2010, about 400,000 people who wanted to migrate to the EU were stopped on its borders. In the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark and other countries in Northern Europe, populist anti-immigrant parties are gaining support, nurtured by chauvinist government campaigns carried out under the guise of the "war on terror" that largely targets Muslims. It is in the interest of the working class in each country to fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees! Down with the EU and racist "Fortress Europe"!*

## SPD and Left Party: To Capitalism's Rescue

In response to the capitalist attacks stemming from the crisis in the EU, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany recognized the urgent necessity for the working class of Europe, and especially the powerful German proletariat, to take class-struggle action. On May Day 2010, the SpAD intervened for "Solidarity with the Greek workers!" and for "Class struggle against the German capitalists!" (*Spartakist* No. 183, May 2010). The chief obstacles to such struggle are the reformist workers parties. SPD and Left Party, together with the trade-union bureaucracy, and the left groups that orient toward them.

In the summer, the SPD came out in favor of euro bonds. Peer Steinbrück, a former SPD finance minister, gave the reasons in an interview with *Spiegel* (12 September):

> "One has to explain to people that the EU in this form is the answer both to 1945 and to the 21st century, in a dramatically altered world with new heavyweights, and that Germany benefits from the continued integration of Europe in political, economic and societal ways. And, of course, that means the Germans will have to pay. But the money is well invested in both our future and Europe's, in peace and prosperity."

Steinbrück and the SPD are playing here with the fear of war, which is prevalent in many parts of Europe as a result of the two world wars. This takes real *chutzpah*: during the Balkans war in 1999 the SPD-led government was the first since WWII to introduce German troops outside the country. The SPD's differences with Merkel are strictly tactical, amounting to a debate over what's best for German imperialism. Its support to the euro bonds scheme reflects the fear that Merkel's hardline policies could destroy the EU, thereby possibly killing the goose that has laid a golden egg for German capitalism and enabled the Social Democrats to continue supping at the table of German capital. The SPD exemplifies what V.I. Lenin called bourgeois workers parties: parties with a working-class base, especially through the unions, but with a thoroughly pro-capitalist program and leadership. The SPD besmirched the banner of workers internationalism by voting for war credits for German imperialism in 1914. Ever since, the SPD has been a vehement enemy of revolution.

The Left Party—a fusion of the former Stalinist ruling party of the DDR and a split from the SPD, including a section of the trade-union bureaucracy—is seen by many leftist and working-class militants as an alternative to the SPD. The Left Party might talk a bit more about solidarity with Greece, but like the SPD it accepts the framework of the EU and the common currency while arguing that this alliance of imperialist robbers should carry out more progressive policies. Thus, the Left Party

**NOTICE**

***Workers Vanguard* skips an issue in December.**

**Our next issue will be dated January 6.**

# Brutal CUNY Cop Attack on Tuition Protesters

On November 21, hundreds of City University of New York (CUNY) students marched to Baruch College to protest a proposed tuition hike at a Board of Trustees public meeting. In retaliation, campus administrators unleashed their cop thugs on students, who were roughed up and arrested. Pleading poverty as the state and city governments have slashed education and social services to the bone while gouging public workers, the Trustees approved the hike on November 28. The heavily black and Latino CUNY student population—mostly from working-class families and already thousands of dollars in debt—will now be made to pay further for the economic downturn, making it even more difficult to continue their studies.

At a feeder demonstration on CUNY's City College campus ahead of the November 21 meeting, Spartacus Youth Club comrades led chants of "Free quality education! Abolish the administration!" The money and resources exist to provide quality education for all. But getting our hands on the wealth of society requires breaking the power of the bourgeoisie through workers revolution. Addressing the crowd, an SYC speaker pointed the way forward: "Students must ally with the working class in fighting against the capitalist system."

We print below a November 29 letter from the New York SYC to Chancellor Matthew Goldstein protesting the police repression.

* * *

The Spartacus Youth Club denounces the arrests of at least fifteen protesters at Baruch College on Monday, November 21. Campus police—acting under the oversight of a university administrator—prevented hundreds of students from attending a puhlic hearing before the CUNY Board of Trustees on a proposed $300/year tuition hike. The university administration's claim that the protesters "surged forward" was exposed as a brazen lie by video footage that showed the police unleashing a sudden baton attack against dozens trapped in the Baruch College lobby.

The actions of the CUNY cops, similar to recent cop attacks at UC Davis and elsewhere, are unmistakable acts of intimidation meant to silence student protest against the administration's campaign for tuition increases. This repression coincides with a wave of brutal police attacks and mass arrests targeting Occupy protesters around the country.

At least five protesters are facing charges including criminal trespass, attempted grand larceny and resisting arrest. On November 28, three more protesters were arrested at Baruch College while the Board of Trustees met and approved the tuition hike. The Spartacus Youth Club demands that all the charges against these protesters be dropped immediately, and that no further actions, including suspensions and expulsions, be taken against them! ■

Abramson/Chronicle of Higher Education

**New York City, November 21: Cops arrest protester at CUNY Board of Trustees public meeting.**

## Subscription Drive...

*(continued from page 2)*

for our articles on Egypt—in which we emphasized the importance of tbe working class emerging as a contender for power in its own right as against the military and Islamists—and in defense of the Palestinians against Israeli state terror. One polarizing issue was our call on workers around the world to take a stand for military defense of Libya against the U.S./NATO imperialist butchers and their "opposition" lackeys on the ground, without offering any political support whatsoever to Qaddafi's capitalist regime. Our position shocked the sensibilities of one student so much that, within a few weeks, she cancelled her subscription. Well, a revolutionary internationalist newspaper isn't for everyone.

From September on, we intersected the growing Occupy protests in New York City and elsewhere. The Occupy movement has attracted broad support among wide layers of the population searching for some way to fight the wrenching effects of the recession. But the liberal-populist outlook of the protests is premised on the false notions that American capitalist "democracy" can be made to work for the little guy and that the working class is just another sector of the "people," i.e., the amorphous "99 percent." Although we have received a hearing for our views, selling a large amount of individual *WV* copies, we sold comparatively few subscriptions, underscoring the tremendous gulf between our Marxist worldview and the liberal politics of Occupy.

One standout of this year's campaign was the fine work of our new SYC members in Lansing, Michigan. With the help of comrades in the Midwest, the Chicago/Lansing SYC sold dozens of subscriptions at Michigan State University and elsewhere. Comrades who intervened into Occupy Lansing had a polarizing impact on protesters on account of our forthright opposition to the Democrats as a party of capital and to the police as the enforcers of capitalist rule.

A key part of our annual sub drives involves traveling to regions of the country where we do not have a regular presence in order to meet with current subscribers, offer our paper to new readers and sample political consciousness and moods, from the campuses to the workplaces and union halls. This year, our subscriptions in North Carolina and Oregon increased significantly, and we also had success at the Detroit Labor Day rally as well as on campuses in Arizona and Texas, although it was slow going in Massachusetts.

On many regional campuses, the disastrous effects of the economic meltdown piqued student interest in reading a newspaper that opposes capitalism. Many students who subscribed also were motivated by opposition to racism and anti-immigrant bigotry as well as the ongoing assault on abortion rights. While we had success at many public universities that attract working-class students (a student in Durham, North Carolina, allocated the last of her laundry money for a subscription), sales were more difficult at elite campuses like the University of Chicago and Harvard as well as the University of California at Berkeley.

As usual, on some campuses we had to fight for our right to distribute our paper. At the University of New Orleans, armed police kicked us off campus following a sharp confrontation with a racist who hated our defense of the Pelican Bay, California, prisoners on hunger strike. Notably, the campus chapter of Amnesty International defended our right to be on campus, allowing us to set a sales table back up. At the University of Massachusetts Boston, cops who approached our table left us alone after we asserted our right to get out our views, much to the displeasure of a member of the anti-communist International Socialist Organization hovering nearby.

Making our paper available to black workers and students is especially important to our party. Subjected to racial oppression that is endemic to capitalist America, black workers—strategically placed in the economy—will play a key role in the vanguard of the fight to overthrow capitalism. Since 2008, we had run into some difficulty selling subscriptions to black people, for whom the election of the first black president was supposed to provide some relief from the raw racist reality of this society. Older black workers still tend to tell us that Obama is "limited in what he can do" and fear that any criticism might play into the hands of racist reaction. But with the bloom off the Obama administration—one student called Obama "the world's biggest terrorist," citing rapper Lupe Fiasco—our sales this year to black workers and students increased significantly.

*Workers Vanguard* welcomes our new and returning subscribers. A Marxist, working-class press is a crucial scaffolding for our small fighting propaganda group, the nucleus of a future Leninist vanguard party. It is the purpose of *WV* to propagate the revolutionary program in addressing the struggles of workers and the oppressed. We encourage all readers to carefully consider our arguments, attend our public events, write us and let us know what they think. ■

also advocates euro bonds. But since when does workers solidarity with the embattled Greek masses consist of pleading with the government to offer bank loans at a fractionally reduced interest rate?

The left face of the Left Party is its vice chairwoman, Sahra Wagenknecht of the misnamed "Communist Platform." Wagenknecht absurdly argues that government budgets must "be freed from their dependency on the capital markets." To this end, she wants a public European bank to be set up, which would offer favorable interest rates. Only a dyed-in-the-wool social democrat could imagine that the budget of a capitalist government could be independent of the capitalist market! And there are already hundreds of publicly owned banks in Europe; all of them play by the rules of the capitalist profit system. Wagenknecht's reformist schemes are whitewash to obscure the Left Party's role in supporting capitalist exploitation. They ought to know about government budgets, since they have entered into governments in Berlin and other regions that have laid off workers and cut public spending.

The German trade-union federation DGB has spent lots of membership dues money to run ads in newspapers campaigning for "Yes to Europe! Yes to the euro!" Meanwhile, the DGB bureaucrats' "solidarity" with the Greek working class fighting against the crisis has been limited to a few speeches on May Day and maybe a letter of support. No struggle has been waged against the German government and the German capitalists, who are the most outspoken proponents of the austerity measures that are hitting the Greek, Portuguese and other working classes so hard.

The same social-democratic union bureaucracy has contributed to advancing German imperialism and its dominant role in the EU by presiding over a massive slashing of real wages. The union misleadership propounds the class-collaborationist lie that what is good for the company and Germany is good for the workers. Most recently, the labor tops agreed to a 20 percent wage cut for all new employees of Lufthansa at the new Berlin airport. In a short space of time, this sellout deal will serve to lower wages at Lufthansa generally. It is urgently necessary to defend wages and working conditions through class struggle: Organize the unorganized! Equal pay for equal work! For an end to the division between permanent employees, contracted workers and workers on short-term contracts! One company, one union, one wage scale! Forge a class-struggle trade-union leadership, linked to the building of a revolutionary party!

### For the Socialist United States of Europe!

In 1929, Leon Trotsky, then the leader of the Left Opposition fighting for authentic Bolshevism against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, wrote:

> "In the person of the Opposition the vanguard of the European proletariat tells its present rulers: In order to unify Europe it is first of all necessary to wrest power out of your hands. We will do it. We will unite Europe. We will unite it against the hostile capitalist world. We will turn it into a mighty drill-ground of militant socialism. We will make it the cornerstone of the world socialist federation."
>
> —"Disarmament and the United States of Europe" (October 1929)

The Socialist United States of Europe, in conjunction with the conquest of proletarian power in the U.S., Japan and throughout the world, would lay the basis for a real international division of labor in a planned economy, thus enormously increasing the productivity of society. Establishing the genuine equality of the peoples of Europe, it would eradicate the source of the imperialist wars that have brought Europe so many times near extinction.

The multiethnic German working class, with its various components from Mediterranean lands, the Balkans and East Europe—who often bring with them more militant class-struggle traditions—possesses the living links to the struggles of Greek workers, of Turkish and Kurdish workers in Turkey and of workers elsewhere. Class struggle by German workers would resonate powerfully with the French proletariat and would be a beacon to the working class worldwide. Central to our perspective as Trotskyists is the reforging of the Fourth International as the world party of proletarian revolution, the task the International Communist League, and its German section, the SpAD, has set for itself. ■

# South Africa

# Early Years of the Communist Party

*We reprint below the second part of an article from* Spartacist South Africa *No. 7 (Winter 2011), incorporating minor factual and stylistic corrections. It is an edited version of a class given by comrade Karen Cole at a meeting in 2000 of Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League. Part One appeared in* WV *No. 991 (25 November). The article refers to the Voortrekkers, who were Afrikaner farmers (Boers) who left the British Cape Colony in the first half of the 19th century for the African interior.*

*PART TWO*

The newly founded Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) had not completely broken from the Labour Party. Sidney Bunting and David Ivon Jones as well still saw the militant white miners as strategic to the South African revolution. The young party was immediately faced with an enormous and contradictory class battle on the Rand. The 1922 ten-week strike of white miners was a hard-fought battle in defence of the racist colour bar, the reservation of higher-paid job classifications for whites. Miners seized towns and carried out armed combat with the police and army. Four strikers were hanged, and three of them went to the gallows singing "The Red Flag." Aerial artillery was used against striking workers. The Jan Smuts government ruthlessly crushed the strike.

The strike fundamentally had a reactionary purpose—to preserve the colour bar in mining. The ostensible reason for the strike was in defence of skilled miners who had been retrenched [laid off], but everyone knew this was part of the drive to replace these privileged white workers with superexploited black labour. Back in 1907 when Keir Hardie, a Scottish miners' leader, visited South Africa, he was pelted when he raised the basic demand that white unions should be opened to the blacks on the basis of equal pay for equal work. White workers' consciousness had not changed much from that time, but the mine owners were more determined now that falling gold prices required increasing the rate of exploitation by hiring black labour.

The strike had various leaderships, and one of them was headquartered in the offices of the Communist Party led by Bill Andrews, a longtime union leader and party founder. This included expelled union leaders who considered themselves Marxists. There was a Commando faction led by Afrikaner miners modelled on the Commando units of the Voortrekkers who terrorised and murdered blacks and Indians. At a march one could see a banner, "Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White S.A." (*Class and Colour in South Africa*, 1983).

International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa

**Mass workers rally in Johannesburg, June 1918. Crowd was addressed by speaker from International Socialist League, predecessor of Communist Party.**

It is interesting to note that Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman of the APO [African Political Organisation] and Clements Kadalie of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), the two most prominent political leaders of the coloured and black masses at the time, both rightly condemned the racism of the strike, but coming from petty-bourgeois perspectives, they both directed their appeals to the racist Smuts government to increase their control and repression of the unions.

Eddie Roux wrote that Bunting, who had always been a regular soapboxer, never spoke publicly throughout the strike at the hundreds of meetings, and walked around muttering criticisms. The CPSA propaganda condemned attacks on black Africans. At the same time, Bunting and the CPSA didn't directly attack the colour bar regulations, rationalising that the rules kept up overall wage levels and the fight should be for improving the wages of Africans.

In November 1922 the Fourth Congress of the Comintern issued a protest statement on the execution of the four strikers. They stated that the task was to "draw the native workers too into the struggle against South African Capitalism, and thereby ensure common and final victory" (reprinted in *South African Communists Speak*, 1981).

Cape Archives, Cape Town

**Striking white miners protest outside Johannesburg court, 1922. Militant strike had reactionary goal: defense of racist color-bar in Rand mines.**

## After the Rand Strike

In 1923 the Afrikaner Nationalist Party of Barry Hertzog and the Labour Party made an alliance to defeat the Smuts government, which became known as the "Pact." The Labour Party promised to drop any mention of socialism, and the Nationalists promised to drop their call for secession and an independent Afrikaner republic. What they had in common was white supremacism. To get a flavour of this electoral alliance, in the midst of the campaign, the Labour Party was calling for the expulsion of Asians.

From Moscow, Jones advocated a united front with the Labour Party. In this way they would be part of the anti-Smuts alliance. He argued with Bunting at the time of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in November 1922 that this would be an application of the anti-imperialist united front as put forward in the "Theses on the Eastern Question." Bunting brought back from the Congress the importance of fighting for "immediate demands" and for the "united front." Bunting argued for Comintern discipline and for carrying out the decisions of the Comintern in South Africa, and argued against sectarianism. In keeping with such arguments, the CPSA voted to apply for affiliation to the Labour Party and to support its electoral alliance with the Nationalists.

There was some resistance to this line in the Western Cape where the party had more links with black and coloured labour, but they fell in line. This strategy of the CPSA had to repel black militants. After the victory of the Pact alliance at the polls, the CPSA quickly withdrew their support, and called for Labour Party delegates to oppose putting Frederic Creswell and Tommy Boydell, Labour Party leaders, in the new cabinet. The new government as promised passed yet more laws to reinforce the colour bar and further exclude blacks.

In the article "Permanent Revolution vs. the 'Anti-Imperialist United Front': The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997), we criticise the ambiguity of the slogan for the "anti-imperialist united front" put forward in 1922 by the Fourth Congress, as easily interpreted as a two-stage programme for revolution in the colonial countries and as a call to ally with bourgeois-nationalist forces. However, in the *Spartacist* article we also make the point that it was a sharp descent from these unclear formulations and opportunist appetites to the full-blown betrayal later of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution under Stalin and Bukharin. The South African party vastly misread the white miners' anger coming off the smashing of the Rand strike. Their continued support to the Labour Party demonstrated their continued ambivalence toward the black proletariat.

In 1924 the CPSA national conference debated entering the Labour Party once again. Arguments based on interpretation of Comintern tactics that applied to Europe—where there were mass social-democratic parties—were used to motivate entry. By this time, the Rand strike and the Pact government had had an impact on Bunting and the party, as both made clearer that both the English-speaking and Afrikaner workers were tightly in the grip of their racist and nationalist leadership. Bunting and Roux argued against entry and that the main task was to take their programme to the black masses. This time they won. Some older members in the right wing fell away, and this cleared the way for the party to turn its face to the black proletariat.

The new youth group, the Young Communist League (YCL) of the CPSA, most directly challenged the old status quo of the CPSA. In 1921 Eddie Roux, one of the first Afrikaners and native-born South Africans in the party, founded the youth group. As Eddie Roux came more under the influence of Bunting, he became an advocate for recruiting blacks to the party. Roux became a regular speaker for the Communist Party at ICU meetings. The ICU, which I will get back to later, was growing rapidly at this time. When Roux argued in early 1924 that they must recruit black youth and they must set up a Cape Town branch so they could recruit black and coloured youth, he found himself in a small minority. Roux appealed to the Young Communist International, and he was backed up, and the policy was implemented. The YCL passed a motion stating that the main task of the YCL of South Africa is the organisation of the native youth.

They recruited two blacks early on: Stanley Silwana and Thomas Mbeki. Trade unionist Johnny Gomas, who became a longtime leader of the CPSA, heard Roux speak at a YCL meeting in Cape Town in 1924 and joined the party. Bunting had found new bloc partners with the new youth. Also, the Cape Town branch was more determined to recruit coloureds and blacks where racism was slightly more modulated than in the raw Rand area.

## The ICU

There was tremendous political activity among the black workers in the mid to late 1920s. The ICU was the first mass popular semi-political union organisation of black and coloured workers. Its influence far overshadowed that of the Native Congress [predecessor of African National Congress (ANC)] in its time. The development of the ICU reflected the eagerness of black workers to organise in self-defence. It was organised by Clements Kadalie who came from Nyasaland, today's Malawi. He organised the black Cape Town dock workers in 1919, and the ICU soon grew into the main political representative of blacks in

South Africa—organising city and farm labourers all the way to Durban.

The ICU was racked with internal contradictions because it was a massive populist organisation. Kadalie endorsed the Afrikaner Nationalist leader General Barry Hertzog because he sent greetings and a donation to the ICU. Kadalie looked to British trade-union bureaucrats and liberals, and by the end of the 1920s the organisation was disintegrating. In December 1926 he expelled the Communist Party members in the organisation, partly to please his newly acquired British liberal patrons. CPers had entered the ICU to recruit out of it, and in 1923 Eddie Roux helped set up the Johannesburg ICU office. Young Communist League member Thomas Mbeki became the Transvaal secretary of the ICU. Among those expelled along with Mbeki in 1926 were Johnny Gomas and Jimmy La Guma, who had joined the CPSA while in the ICU and were the Cape Town ICU leadership. By the time they were expelled, the CPSA was so popular that several branches protested their expulsion.

## Night School and the Unions

The Ferreirastown night school, set up in 1925, was run by T.W. Thibedi, the first black member of the International Socialist League (ISL) and later a CPSAer. It had its origins dating back to the days of the ISL. By 1928, it had over 100 students and taught literacy with the use of *The ABC of Communism* [1920 book by Bolsheviks Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky] along with other basic subjects. The school had been moved to a bigger building and was now run by a retired schoolteacher and militant atheist. In order to avoid arrest past nine o'clock, the teachers had to manufacture fake passes for all the students.

University of the Witwatersrand

**1925 ICU executive: Mbeki, La Guma and Gomas (standing left to right), Kadalie and Champion (seated). ICU newspaper promoted unity of black, white workers.**

Much of the CPSA's work required Bunting's legal skills—he was for years the best-known lawyer in the country defending blacks against state repression. One story from this period of rapid black recruitment is interesting: Thibedi went to address a meeting of 1,000 in Potchefstroom. He was arrested, and the entire crowd attempted to follow him to the court. Thibedi was charged with inciting hostility between the races. Bunting defended him, and an unusually liberal judge acquitted him. The CPSA held an immediate rally to celebrate the victory. A group of whites attacked the celebrating crowd, including attacking the white Communists. In response to seeing that a Communist lawyer could get a black man out of jail, and then witnessing the same white Communists being attacked by other white men, most of the residents of the location decided en masse to join the Communist Party.

The CPSA paper was renamed the *South African Worker* and had more than half its articles in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho. The paper also serialised an adapted version of *The ABC of Communism*, the book used in the Soviet Union to teach Marxism and literacy. In the late 1920s, the CPSA finally made breakthroughs in both organising black unions and joint struggles of white and black workers. They formed the Non-European Federation of Trade Unions in the Witwatersrand, and membership in the unions and the party grew rapidly. A whole new layer of black leadership was brought in, and the party was transforming itself into a majority black party of a couple of thousand. The South African party had some all-black branches. They had organised industrial unions with black leadership. The party had made a tremendous leap.

## The Sixth Congress of the Comintern

One cannot evaluate this period without the knowledge that a fierce battle was going on in the Comintern that impacted this small and remote party struggling to apply a revolutionary programme. In economically backward Russia there was a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, which had its material basis in the destruction of industry and the death of many of the most politically advanced workers during the Civil War, combined with the defeat of revolutionary opportunities abroad, especially the 1923 German Revolution. A parasitic bureaucratic caste led by Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat. Stalin's rationalisation for defeatism and abandonment of international revolution, "Socialism in One Country," ultimately dictated the strategy for the South African revolution, and would require the working class to be politically subordinated to a so-called "anti-imperialist united front" with the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries. Supporters of Trotsky's Left Opposition, many of whom were arrested and ultimately murdered by Stalin's police, fought against the degeneration of the revolution and for international proletarian revolution necessary to build socialism.

The ramifications of Stalin's class-collaborationist policies were tragically illustrated in China. In this largely peasant country the working class was highly concentrated in a few key cities like Shanghai and by 1925, inspired by the Russian Revolution, it had begun to seek the road to power. But the Comintern leadership under Bukharin and Stalin was abandoning its revolutionary purpose. Over Trotsky's objections, the Chinese Communist Party was subordinated to the nationalist party, the Guomindang. In 1927 the revolution was crushed. Out of this decisive historical test, Trotsky generalised the perspective of permanent revolution. This was codified in *The Third International After Lenin* (1929) and later in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930). In so doing, he both incorporated and transcended the evolved communist position on the colonial question as codified at the Communist International's First and Second Congresses. [For more background, readers are referred to the 2008 ICL pamphlet *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution*.]

South African History Online (inset), Muravei-Guide

**Above: Group of delegates to the Fourth Comintern Congress, 1922. CPSA leader Sidney Bunting (inset) was in attendance.**

The African National Congress (as the South African Native National Congress renamed itself in 1923) was the leadership of the only non-white petty-bourgeois nationalist movement in South Africa. It held disdain for workers. The ANC had consistently looked to British imperialism for their favours. They had no particular interest in the struggles of the black proletariat. J.T. Gumede in this period was the ANC leader most supportive of the Comintern. He travelled the country after visiting the USSR to popularise the idea of Communism. His report to ANC chiefs in 1928, which referred to the overthrow of the tsar in 1917, caused the tribal leaders to express alarm that they too would be killed if there was a Bolshevik Revolution in South Africa. The degenerating Comintern courted the ANC as part of its appeal to nationalist leaders.

In February 1927, the Comintern organised the "Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism" in Brussels. This conference was attended by Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian bourgeois-nationalist leader; Lemine Senghor, Senegalese Pan-Africanist; Messali Hadj, Algerian nationalist leader who ended up supporting [French imperialist ruler Charles] de Gaulle's colonialist reform schemes in 1958 in the midst of the war of independence; and Mohammed Hatta who became an anti-communist Indonesian nationalist. The Congress read out greetings from the widow of Sun Yat-sen of the Guomindang of China just as the Shanghai proletariat and their Communist Party leadership were about to be slaughtered by her party. The Stalinised Comintern had made Chiang Kai-shek an honorary member of the Comintern, thus cementing the subordination of the Chinese CP to these butchers.

James La Guma attended the Congress as representative of the CPSA. Afterward La Guma travelled to Moscow and participated in discussions with Bukharin and other CI leaders. A resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the CI (ECCI) laid out the same two-stage revolution strategy for South Africa that led to annihilation of the working-class base of the Chinese CP.

The ECCI's resolution for the South African party, with the central slogan of "an independent Native republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government," was referred to the section for discussion. This was, in fact, the application of the disastrous Stalinist Chinese strategy to South African soil: that only an anti-imperialist capitalist revolution led by the nationalist petty bourgeoisie was on the agenda. The dictatorship of

*continued on page 8*

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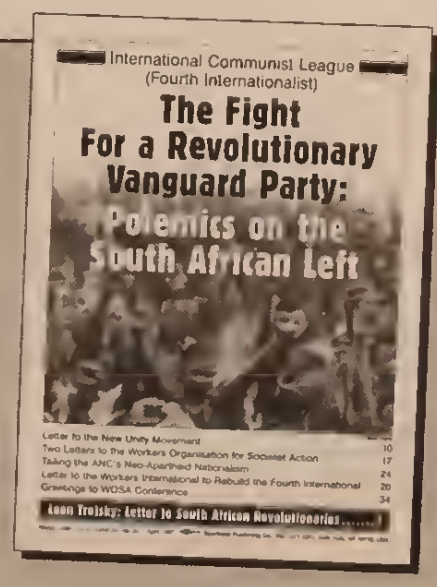


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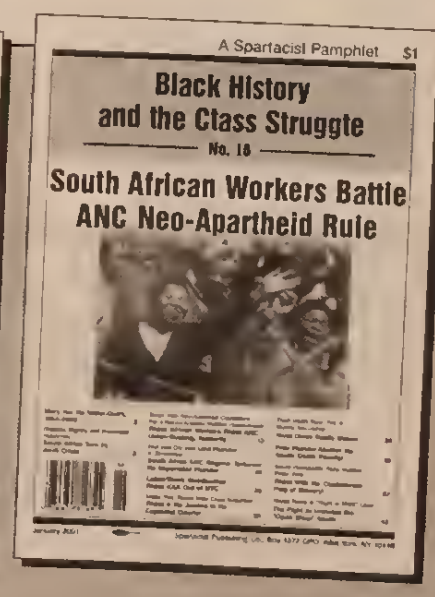


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# South Africa...

*(continued from page 7)*

the proletariat is not on the agenda and must wait.

Bunting and his wife Rebecca and Edward Roux attended the 1928 Sixth Congress of the Comintern as delegates representing the majority of the party which opposed the new slogan. The Buntings found that the whole atmosphere of the Comintern had changed between the Fourth Congress they attended and the Sixth—the Fourth Congress had a spirit of hope and comradeship. They came to the Sixth Congress excited that they could report that the party was now largely black African. Out of 1,750 members, 1,600 were black. However, they were bluntly greeted with "We are going to attack you," and were cold-shouldered by what Roux called "a hard-bitten gang of bureaucrats." Bunting, who had fought for more than ten years to transform the party into majority black, was dismissed as a "white chauvinist." Roux says he ran into Trotskyist sympathisers at the Congress and heard cynical statements of delegates that Trotsky was right on China, but Trotsky was no longer a Communist.

Bukharin sycophants Jay Lovestone, a careerist in the U.S. party, and John Pepper, a Hungarian Communist who had been sent to the U.S., are mentioned as demonstratively ignoring Bunting's speeches in the commission. Pepper was the major advocate of a farmer-labour party policy in the U.S. CP—basically a two-class workers and peasants party for America. James W. Ford, a leading black American delegate, ignored them.

Bunting spoke against the "native republic" slogan, arguing that black African peasants have been drawn into the working class where they are most militant, i.e., they are proletarianised. Industry in South Africa is far advanced for a colonial country, and so consequently is the working class. Bunting objected to the fact that the draft programme of the CI referred only to "colonial masses" and not the colonial proletariat. There are *classes* in the colonial world. We do not have to wait for capitalism to develop; it has been thrust upon us. He begged for more Comintern attention to South Africa, and less ignorance of the particular conditions in different colonies of the African continent. He said in his 20 August 1928 speech at the Congress: "the class struggle is practically coincident and simultaneous with the national struggle" (*South Africa's Radical Tradition*, 1996). Roux also argued at the Congress that it is not the task for the party to artificially build a nationalist movement: "There is no need to go through the laborious and (from the point of view of the revolution) dangerous process of building up a native bourgeois-nationalist movement the leadership of which must be displaced before the proletarian revolution can be achieved" (*South Africa's Radical Tradition*).

Bunting also argued that the slogan would alienate white workers, that either the neutrality or occasional support of white labour would be of great value as a shield against state repression for the revolutionary native movement. Such arguments undermined his valid arguments against two-stage revolution in South Africa. All the CP's actions on the ground at home were toward Africanising the party. But Bunting did not have Lenin's understanding that the struggle for national liberation using the methods of proletarian class struggle could be a powerful motor force for socialist revolution in South Africa. So he had nothing to counterpose to the Stalinist programme of politically chaining the black masses to the nationalist leadership.

Maybuye Centre, University of the Western Cape

**John Gomas addressing Communist Party meeting on steps of Johannesburg City Hall in 1932.**

It didn't really matter what Bunting and Roux argued about the class forces or the status of the national movement in South Africa. Hammering out a programme for revolution was not the purpose of this Congress. In evaluating the debates with Bunting and Roux at the Sixth Congress, you have to keep in mind that really what is going on is the increasingly conservative Comintern clubbing any potential opposition to the nationally limited programme of "Socialism in One Country" and class peace with the world bourgeoisie. The Bukharinites (although Bukharin was deposed soon after this Congress) were not looking for a correct political programme for South Africa; they were looking for followers who would toe the line of the Comintern leadership. Thus the Comintern resolved that: "Our aim should be to transform the African National Congress into a fighting nationalist revolutionary organisation against the white bourgeoisie and the British imperialists, based upon the trade unions, peasant organisations, etc., developing systematically the leadership of the workers and the Communist Party in this organisation" (Resolution on "The South African Question" adopted by the ECCI following the Sixth Congress, reprinted in *South African Communists Speak*).

Roux refers to a document that was circulating among certain delegates at the Congress—the first and third parts of *The Third International After Lenin*. Trotsky made the point that the International had no programme; it had rationalisations for defeats and generalities to cover its zigzag policies. The Stalinists had replaced the struggle to win the working class organised in the unions to the Communist Party by the opportunist utilisation of the ready-made apparatus of the trade-union bureaucracy exemplified in England where the Soviet government maintained a bloc with the labour leadership just as they were selling out a general strike, or in the so-called "revolutionary national bourgeoisie" as in China—in both cases ending in defeat for the workers and oppressed. Trotsky was launching an international struggle to win the communists back to the programme that had made the Bolshevik Revolution.

Seven years later, Trotsky wrote a letter to the fledgling Left Oppositionists of the Workers' Party of South Africa in response to their draft theses. He took issue with their argument that "the slogan of a 'Black Republic' is *equally* harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a 'South Africa for the whites'." Based on the application of permanent revolution, Trotsky wrote that the character of the proletarian revolution in South Africa will be one of national liberation of the black masses as well:

> "Three-quarters of the population of South Africa (almost six million of the almost eight million total) is composed of non-Europeans. A victorious revolution is unthinkable without the awakening of the native masses. In its turn, that will give them what they are so lacking today—confidence in their strength, a heightened personal consciousness, a cultural growth.
>
> "Under these conditions the South African Republic will emerge first of all as a 'black' republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for the whites or brotherly relations between the two races—depending mainly on the conduct of the whites. But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.
>
> "Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relation not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character.
>
> "We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.
>
> "Nevertheless, the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by *its own* methods.
>
> "The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the *class struggle*."
>
> —Leon Trotsky, "On the South African Theses" (20 April 1935). *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1934-35)* (Pathfinder Press, 1971)

Bunting and Roux never found their way to Trotsky's Left Opposition although other communists did join Trotsky's Left Opposition and the Fourth International. Today we Trotskyists of Spartacist South Africa are the continuity of Lenin and Trotsky's party. We fight for a black-centred workers government as part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa. This is directly counterposed to the illusion fostered by the South African Communist Party today that the "national democratic revolution" has achieved a "rainbow nation" based on the ANC's celebrated doctrine of "non-racialism." We call for workers to break with the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance—a class-collaborationist nationalist popular front that ties the working class to the capitalist rulers.

Just a few final notes. Jones, always sickly, spent his last days in Moscow providing the invaluable service of translating parts of the early works of Lenin into English, including popularising *What Is To Be Done?* He also continued to write on the black question, and Africa and world imperialism. He died in 1924. Bunting stayed in the CPSA. He carried on a difficult and courageous election campaign in Thembuland with Rebecca Bunting and their comrade Gana Makabeni as Xhosa interpreter. They attempted for the first time to bring the communist programme into the rural reserves whilst being watched by police and opposed by the Native chiefs living on government salaries. Bunting and others were purged in 1931 as the party came under the direct manipulation of Stalin's fake "left turn," and he died some years later, still a loyal Communist. Eddie Roux repudiated his communist politics, became an academic and did a service by writing *Time Longer Than Rope* and *S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography*.

The early South African Communist Party was a mix of comrades in motion, grappling with a rapidly changing reality, and racked with contradictions. There was an element in this party that was revolutionary internationalist, trying to apply Marxism to South Africa, and particularly to the question of ending black oppression. They were inspired and transformed by the Russian Revolution, but, in the end, their struggle to sort out a strategy and programme for black liberation and the dictatorship of the proletariat was cut short as the Comintern they looked to was strangled by Stalin and his heirs. It is the revolutionary Trotskyists of Spartacist South Africa who are carrying forward the necessary fight for the programme of proletarian revolution in Southern Africa. ■


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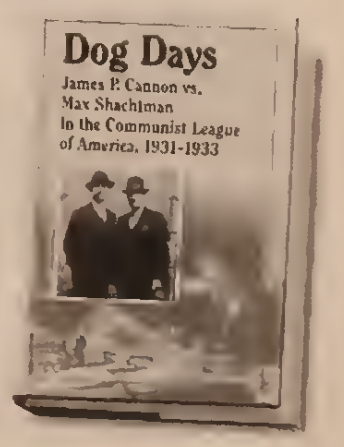


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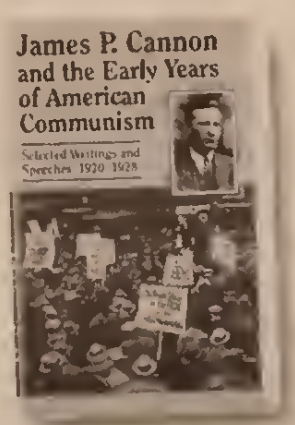


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WORKERS VANGUARD

# 2011 SUBJECT INDEX

Issues No. 971 (7 January) through No. 992 (9 December)

## GUIDE TO THE SUBJECT INDEX

- This subject index covers issues of *Workers Vanguard* published during 2011, from issue No. 971 (7 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 992 (9 December). During this time, *WV* was published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August, and skipping the last issue in December.
- The fullest listing is by SUBJECT. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically. Entries are listed chronologically with two exceptions: all entries comprising a series are listed together immediately following the first entry of the series; corrections immediately follow the relevant entry. An asterisk (*) after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction follows.
- Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken down into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head and preceded by a dot (•). The numbers following each entry headline give the issue number, date and page number(s) for the article. Thus:

  For Free, Safe Abortion on Demand!, #975, 4 Mar. (12, 11)

  means the headline of the article, issue No. 975, dated 4 March 2011 beginning on page 12 and continuing on page 11.
- No entry is listed twice; refer to cross-references for guidance in locating the subject head for particular articles. Cross-references are of two types: those following the word "see" deal centrally with the subject head; those following the words "see also" are related articles. Subject heads in cross-references are separated by a semicolon, while subcategories of subject heads are separated by a comma. Thus:

  Workplace Safety—See **Labor: General**. See also **Japan**.

  means that articles about workplace safety can be found by going to the subject head **LABOR** and looking under the subcategory **General**. Related articles can be found by going to the subject head **JAPAN**
- Individuals mentioned in articles are usually not a subject heading unless the article is primarily about the given person. Foreign political organizations are generally cross-referenced to their appropriate countries, while U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.
- Articles relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings and not normally under any other subject heading. Articles that deal centrally with U.S. foreign policy will be found under **U.S.: International Relations** or under the relevant geographical heading. For example, articles about the war on Libya will be found under **LIBYA**.
- Articles under the *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* (CSDN) masthead are by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.
- Abbreviations used in entries are:

  C: Correction

  CSDN: *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* article

  E: Editorial Note

  L: Letter

  S: Series

  W&R: *Women and Revolution* article

  YSp: *Young Spartacus* article
- Entries for articles that first appeared in the press of another section of the International Communist League indicate the name of the press in parentheses, for example: (*Le Bolchévik*).


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